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A Legacy of Lifelong Learning: Leadership, Lessons, Love, and Laughter in the  
Life of Elizabeth Gammon Pendleton

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A dissertation

presented to

The faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education

---

by

Louise Ratcliffe Bailey Dickson

May 2008

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Dr. Terrence Tollefson, Chair

Dr. Kathy Franklin, Research Specialist

Dr. Jasmine Renner, Committee Member

Dr. Marie Tedesco, Committee Member

Keywords: lifelong learning, educational biography, qualitative



## ABSTRACT

### A Legacy of Lifelong Learning: Leadership, Lessons, Love, and Laughter in the Life of Elizabeth Gammon Pendleton

by

Louise Ratcliffe Bailey Dickson

In the postmodern Information Age (digital and wireless) with the expanded globalization of economies worldwide, there has been a vast transformation of workplace and educational systems. Thus, new meanings for educational practices and learning are evolving. Medical and social literature has suggested that learning throughout the lifetime is the key to successful living. The literature proposed that all types of education (formal, informal, and nonformal) may be a factor in the total well-being of the increasingly older adult population. Consequently, there is an increased need to understand the characteristics, traits, beliefs, and attitudes that generate the incentive for individuals to become lifelong learners.

The purpose of this study was to examine the life of Elizabeth Armetta Gammon Pendleton and identify the characteristics, personality traits, beliefs, and attitudes that distinguish her as a lifelong learner. From an interpretivist perspective, this study assumed that all reality is internal. The rationale of this educational biography was to explore the phenomenon of lifelong learning while also celebrating the unique life of Elizabeth Pendleton. This study employed a detailed narrative description of her life and interviews with people who knew her to construct and develop a theory grounded in oral and traditional history under the framework of lifelong learning.

As a native of a small rural community in the Appalachian Mountains, Pendleton lived a healthy and optimistic life as a student, teacher, leader, and role model for her family, friends, co-workers, and community members. She experienced formal, informal, and nonformal learning for 95 years. Although she never used the phrase “lifelong learner,” she certainly had an inclination toward lifelong learning.

The value of this study of Pendleton’s life journey emerges in the form of naturalistic and user (reader) generalizations within the framework of lifelong learning. The study of Elizabeth Pendleton’s life journey yielded valuable insights that provide an understanding of the phenomenon of lifelong learning and the challenges that researchers, educators, employers, and individuals face as new meanings for educational practices and learning evolve.

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## DEDICATION

Elizabeth Armetta Gammon Pendleton left a legacy of leadership, lessons, love, and laughter. She passed on her love of life, her natural love for learning, and, most importantly, her unconditional love of family. It is she who most inspired my life and this dissertation.

This dissertation is dedicated to the following people who have been supportive of my quest for learning: Elizabeth Armetta Gammon Pendleton, my grandmother in memoriam; Paris Lee Pendleton, my grandfather in memoriam; Todd Jay Dickson, my dear and loving husband; Shirley Ratcliff Carlson, my mother, and my stepfather, Fred Carlson; Robert I. Ratcliff, my father in memoriam, and my stepmother, Dorothy Hanner Ratcliff; Allison Bailey Stewart, my daughter, and my son-in-law, Jerry; Rachel Bailey De Luise, my daughter, and son-in-law, Anthony; my grandchildren, Stephanie Grace Ash, Samuel Bailey Stewart, Sara Louise Stewart, Bailey Raffaele De Luise, Bella Grace De Luise; Paula Pendleton Ratcliffe Cate, my twin sister, and my brother-in-law, Keith; Robert Darby Ratcliff, my brother, and my sister-in-law Teresa Weatherford Ratcliff; Don and Jan Dickson, my mother-in-law and father-in-law, Shelley Dickson Hagan, my sister-in-law, and my nieces and nephews, stepbrothers, stepsisters, and cousins.

May we share the legacy of “everyday greatness” that “Libbie” lived. As she received the legacy of being a lifelong learner from her ancestors, may we pass along the legacy to future generations.

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This dissertation would not have been possible without the individuals who agreed to participate in the research process. Thanks to my research participants for your willingness to contribute information and respond to the interview questions, for your thoughtful and descriptive words, and for sharing your memories of Elizabeth Pendleton: J. Craft Akard, Carol Archer, Stephanie Ash, Steve Bailey, Thelma Barnes, Shirley Carlson, Chris Cate, Elizabeth Cate, Keith Cate, Kevin Cate, Paula Cate, Whit Cross, Anthony De Luise, Rachel De Luise, Todd Dickson, Mike Earles, Martha Gammon, Tim Gammon, Catherine Gilbert, Lucille Cross Jackson, Margaret Keith, Barkley and Judy Mills, Laura Ann Mills, Darby Ratcliff, Dorothy Ratcliff, Robert Ratcliff, Patricia Skelton, Mary Elizabeth Starnes, Allison Bailey Stewart, Jerry Stewart, Sam Stewart, Lorraine Keith Taylor, and Teresa Weatherford Ratcliff.

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As a doctoral fellow in the ELPA department from 2000-2003, and as the founding President of the ETSU Educational Leadership Association, I am grateful for the support and assistance that I received from my fellow doctoral students on our projects and seminars. I am especially grateful to George Naholi, my dear friend from Kenya, for his kind heart and Christian friendship. Importantly, I owe a special debt of gratitude to the lovely and talented Judith Nyabando, my friend from Zimbabwe, for sharing her knowledge of statistics and computers, for her willingness to help other people, and for the time that she spent transcribing all the interviews for this dissertation.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The globalization of economies worldwide has caused a vast transformation of our workplace and educational systems. The causes for the transformation include: changes in societies and cultures, fierce global economic competition, modified work practices, and the new postmodern age of technology combined with a rapidly increasing world population (Jarvis, 2004; Merriam, 1999). Globalization has created the need for students, workers, and adults to “learn how to learn” individually and collectively. Additionally, according to the U. S. National Institute on Aging the population of the United States is aging --- the number of people ages 65 and over is expected to double in size within the next 25 years. By 2030, almost one out of every five Americans – some 72 million people – will be 65 years or older (*Dramatic Changes*, 2006). As the result of these rapid changes in society, learning throughout life is necessary for successful living. This global transformation has led to new meanings for educational practices including the notion that learning needs to span the entire lifetime. Consequently, there is an increased need to understand the characteristics, traits, beliefs, and attitudes that lead individuals to have meaningful lives as lifelong learners. A review of recent literature suggests that education [formal, nonformal, and informal] may be “linked to better health” and well-being as an older adult (*Dramatic Changes*).

Elizabeth Pendleton was born in 1909 in an era *without* women’s rights, financial aid, centers for adult students, distance learning, community encouragement for women to receive a formal education, or community support for women to work outside the home. She lived her entire life in the Appalachian Mountains – a region that was described as having a high rate of illiteracy and a low regard for education. Nevertheless, Pendleton lived a healthy and happy life

as a successful lifelong learner. She attended college during the Great Depression, received a two-year degree from Hiwassee College, and then returned to school and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree from East Tennessee State College in 1955 at age 45. (East Tennessee State College was later renamed several times and is currently East Tennessee State University.)

In addition to being an adult student, Elizabeth Pendleton was a remarkable lady who set an excellent example as a visionary leader, teacher, administrative supervisor, community servant, dedicated church member, friend, wife, mother, and grandmother to the four generations of her descendants who knew and adored her. She was a storyteller, a jokester, an eloquent speaker, an athlete, a country cook, a worthy matron, a traveler, and the list continues.

She lived a vibrant, optimistic, and rewarding life --- she loved her family and her church, she enjoyed her friends, and she loved people for 95 years. What unique traits, characteristics, beliefs, and attitudes did Elizabeth Pendleton have that allowed her to celebrate life everyday for 95 years? What kept her excited about life and learning? How did she inspire so many with her optimistic attitude? What difficulties did she overcome during her lifetime?

During Elizabeth Pendleton's 95-year journey of lifelong learning, she overcame obstacles; the Great Depression, two World Wars, the years of the Cold War, the War on Terrorism, the War in Iraq, and several economic recessions, with optimism, cheerfulness, confidence, and hope. She believed that every day was a "new" day and that each new day brought opportunities for us to improve ourselves and the world. She left a legacy through the lessons she taught, the leadership she provided, the love that she conveyed, and the laughter she shared.

Through this qualitative study, an inclination for lifelong learning was revealed in the life journey of Elizabeth Pendleton. The telling of her story and the rich, thick description, and information provided by the participants in the study imparted valuable insight into the phenomenon of lifelong learning. This study of the life of Elizabeth Pendleton presents a model of a person identified as a lifelong learner; and thus, the information gleaned from the study of her life's journey provided useful information toward the enhancement and understanding of the phenomenon of lifelong learning.

### Intent of the Study

The intent of this study was to examine the life of Elizabeth Armetta Gammon Pendleton and identify the attributes – characteristics, personality traits, beliefs, and attitudes – that contributed to her inclination toward lifelong learning in order to enhance existing theory on lifelong learning. From an interpretivist perspective, this study assumed that all reality is internal. The rationale of this educational biography was to explore the phenomenon of lifelong learning while celebrating the unique life of Elizabeth Pendleton. This study used a detailed narrative description of her life and interviews with people who knew her to confirm and strengthen theory grounded in oral and traditional history within the framework of lifelong learning. A native of a small rural community in Appalachia, Elizabeth Pendleton experienced learning for 95 years. Although she never used the words “lifelong learner,” she exhibited a distinctive inclination toward lifelong learning. This study not only provided naturalistic and user (reader) generalizations that exposed the lifelong learning challenges facing a growing population of aging adults, but also presented Elizabeth Pendleton as an individual inclined to be a lifelong learner who left a legacy of leadership, lessons, love, and laughter.



### Research Questions

This educational biography will analyze the life journey of Elizabeth Pendleton through an examination of family documents and artifacts, audio and visual records, and interview data under the framework of lifelong learning as described by prominent researchers (Hayes 1998, 2004; Jarvis, 2004; Knowles, 2005; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Peterson, 1979). With postmodern globalization and evolving new meanings for learning educational practices to span the entire lifetime, the examination of Elizabeth Pendleton's life within the framework of lifelong learning provides valuable perceptions through the exploration of the following questions:

1. What were Elizabeth Pendleton's personality traits, beliefs, attitudes, and characteristics that led to her motivation or inclination toward lifelong learning?
2. What were the inherent factors that existed in Elizabeth Pendleton's life that served as motivation toward the desire for lifelong learning and leadership opportunities?
3. What were the obstacles or barriers that existed in Elizabeth Pendleton's life that she overcame as a lifelong learner?
4. What types of formal, informal, and nonformal education manifested themselves in the learning journey of Elizabeth Pendleton and what effects resulted from these?
5. What effects (influences) did the life of Elizabeth Pendleton have on her family, church, and community that resulted from her lifelong learning and her leadership journey?
6. In what ways does telling her story enhance the understanding of lifelong learning?

7. What generalizations or experiences from the life of Elizabeth Pendleton can be identified that will expose the lifelong learning challenges that face a growing population of aging adults?

### Significance of the Study

An educational biography is a “method of critical reflection through which the theoretical questions of epistemology become an existential debate about the meaning of adulthood. It is a method of research centered on adult learning that brings about transformative learning among adults involved” (Dominicé, 1990, p. 194). The educational biographical examination of the life of Elizabeth Pendleton with interviews, conversations, and personal correspondence from 33 people who knew her resulted in the development of an interpretivist perspective theory grounded in oral and traditional history under the framework of lifelong learning. The biographical information on the life of Elizabeth Pendleton was gathered from personal access to family records (documents, artifacts, audiotaped interviews, videotaped interviews, family photos, family letters, and other family archived papers) gained by permission from the executor of her estate, and from a series of interviews I conducted with former education colleagues, former students, peers, church members, community members, and relatives of Elizabeth Pendleton.

With the analysis of the life’s journey of one person based on interviews with the people who knew her, the examination of her documents and artifacts, the assessment of audio and visual records of her life, and in the context of the current literature, connections and understanding emerged that illuminated the need for developing a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of lifelong learning in an aging American population.

### Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

This study is delimited to one subject, Elizabeth Pendleton, with data gathered from family archival materials and interviews with people who knew her. As the principal investigator and granddaughter of Elizabeth Pendleton, I realize that there may be a bias toward the subject and the limitations that the relationship created. However, there are also recognizable benefits of having a close relationship with the subject in qualitative research. For example, Jean Piaget observed and studied his own children when he was working on the development of a theory about the stages of cognitive structure (Boeree, 1999); and, although B. F. Skinner's daughter reported that Skinner did not experiment with his children, he did design a special baby crib and observed the behavior of his children (Skinner Foundation, 2007). As the researcher, I relied on the data gathered from the family archives and the personal interviews to explore the phenomenon of lifelong learning, while also celebrating the unique life of Elizabeth Pendleton and the impact that she made on my life and the lives of other family members and friends.

In 1990, when Elizabeth Pendleton (Libbie) was 90 years old, my husband Todd and I honored her with the placement of a bench in the garden of her beloved church, Wheeler United Methodist Church. The bench was placed under her favorite tree, a dogwood, next to a bench honoring her husband, Paris Lee Pendleton. The inscription we placed on her bench was from Proverbs 31:28 and it read, "Her children will 'rise up' and call her blessed . . ." (Revised Standard Version). This inscription was repeated in her remembrance ceremony program when she passed away at age 95 on June 23, 2005. Although I am a granddaughter, she considered my sister, brother, and me, as her children along with her daughter, my mother, Shirley Pendleton Ratcliff Carlson, and the two other generations of great-grandchildren and great-great

grandchildren. This study will honor “Libbie” for the influence that she had on my life and the lives of all those who knew her.

For 12 years I had the unique opportunity to be both a granddaughter and a grandmother at the same time. Many times, I was able to walk holding my grandmother’s hand on one side and my granddaughter’s hand on the other side. From this unique experience, I especially recall realizing the importance of multi-generational relationships and the significance of spending time together and passing on life’s lessons with future generations. I am grateful for the opportunity to have bridged five generations as I walked on the sandy, white beach holding hands with both my grandmother and my granddaughter as the waves splashed against our ankles and the sand slid out from under our feet. In the waning years of Libbie’s life, I cherished every moment that I had with her and often recorded her stories as part of our family archives. My perspective as a grandmother helped me to realize and appreciate the impact that Libbie made on my life and increased my understanding of lifelong learning and lifelong teaching.

Libbie told inspirational stories, humorous stories, legend stories, and true stories - from the Little Red Hen to my favorites, her real-life experiences: riding her horse, Pearl, to school; teasing and playing with her brothers, Sam and Robert Lee; growing up in a large family living on a farm in rural Sullivan County, Tennessee; driving a car, a Model T Ford, for the first time when she was about 12 years old; dating with chaperones when she was a teenager; playing basketball in high school and college; the home birth of my mother, her only child; and many more as she continued to generate stories and make eloquent speeches well into her nineties. Libbie was continually telling stories which contained a lesson – constantly talking and teaching through telling. Now, it seems appropriate that I “rise up” and tell her story – her legacy of lifelong learning which she shared with me through her leadership, lessons, love, and laughter.

### Overview of the Study

This qualitative study is presented in 14 chapters. Chapter 1 provides an introduction, a statement of the purpose, the significance of the study in relation to the phenomenon of lifelong learning with the limitations and delimitations, and an overview of the study. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature that describes the history of adult learning, adult learning theories, trends in the aging American population, educational biography, and literature relevant to education and lifelong learning. Chapter 3 includes a description of the methods and procedures used in this study. Chapter 4 presents the data analysis including charts that provide visual representations of the participants and the data, and Chapters 5 through 13 present an analysis and discussion of summarized data from interviews and family archival records with emergent themes noted in a narrative biographical format. Finally, Chapter 14 presents a summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for educational research regarding lifelong learning.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

*“That each of us holds the key to our own world is a profoundly simple idea, but it could be the most formidable barrier to living any of us will ever face” (Hayes, 1998, p. 7)*

#### Globalization and Learning Practices

The globalization of economies worldwide has led to a vast transformation of our workplace and educational systems. The causes for the transformation include: changes in societies and cultures, fierce global competition, and modified work practices; the concurrent transfer to the new postmodern age of technology – computers, the Internet, cell phones, and I-pods, with instant access to information and communication; and, a rapidly increasing world population. Globalization has created the need for students, workers, and adults to “learn how to learn” individually and collectively. In this postmodern information society, it has been estimated that the amount of information in the world doubles every few years. Some speculate that “half of what professionals know when they finish their formal training will be outdated in less than five years, perhaps even months for those in technology-related careers” (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 15). Hiemstra (2002) cited similar pressures for adults to practice lifelong learning. He listed the pressures as rapid change (societal), continuous escalation of adult occupational obsolescence, and a change in lifestyles or value systems (p. 15). Thus, for a combination of reasons, global transformation has led to evolving new meanings for educational practices and learning.

The Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land Grant Universities issued a report, *Returning to our Roots: A Learning Society* in 1999. The commission, comprised of 24 presidents and chancellors of public state universities and land-grant institutions, aimed to make the case that their institutions played an essential role in making lifelong learning a reality in the

United States. They acknowledged that the “demands of a changing workforce” required workers to continue their education as a consequence of the “pressures produced by an accelerated pace of technological change” (Kellogg Commission, 1999, p. 10). The recommendations to the universities included that they should: make lifelong learning a part of their core public mission; create new kinds of learning environments; and provide public support for lifelong learning. Further, the commission recognized the need for “perpetual learning throughout a lifetime” under the broader issue of creating a learning society (p. 17).

### A Learning Society

Globalization created the need for adults to learn continuously. Nationally and internationally, scholars, including Ranson (1994), Merriam (1999), Moingeon and Edmondson (1996), and Jarvis (2004), have appealed for new educational practices, learning societies, and learning organizations based on the need for individual and collective (group) learning to prepare the workforce and society for the postmodern era age of information (Jarvis; Merriam, 1999). The new frontiers for the future in a global society will involve learning that takes place “in a learning society, rather than an educative one ... [due to] society . . . changing so rapidly that many of the traditional educative organizations are not able to keep abreast with the new demands and so individuals are forced to learn outside the education system” (p. 17). In order to flourish (persevere) in the postmodern age of information, the literature supports a need for a societal transformation away from the post-World War II traditional educational thought that graduation from secondary and post-secondary institutions represented a terminal preparation for participation in the workforce and movement toward the acceptance and application of life-span learning on a continuum. This will require a new philosophy of realized individual and collective of learning throughout life.

As early as the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Dewey (1916) reflected that learning should span a lifetime:

It is commonplace to say that education should not cease when one leaves school. The point of this commonplace is that the purpose of school education is to insure the continuance of education by organizing the powers that insure growth. The inclination to learn from life itself and to make the conditions of life such that all will learn in the process of living is the finest product of schooling. (p. 51)

Dewey's thoughts are insightful and useful as the computer revolution changed the way that education is perceived by society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Hutchins (1968) implied the need for lifelong learning when he wrote about a learning society that "started with an educational vision that everybody would have access to part-time adult education throughout the whole of their lives, but it would also be a society which had succeeded in transforming its values in such a way that learning, fulfillment, becoming human, had become its aims and that all its institutions would be directed to this end" (p. 17).

Other scholars have foreseen a learning society as beneficial for the quality of life for the new information age. Husen's (1974) realization of the computer revolution led him to argue that "educated ability will be democracy's replacement for passed-on social prerogatives" as he recognized the "knowledge explosion," and foresaw "the possibility of equal opportunities for all to receive as much education as they are thought capable of absorbing" (Cayol, 2006, p. 17).

Another variation on an educative society came from Ranson (1994) as he has suggested:

There is a need for the creation of the learning society as a constitutive condition of a new moral and political order. It is only when the values and processes of learning are placed at the centre of polity that the conditions can be established for all individuals to develop their capacities, and that institutions can respond openly and imaginatively to a period of change. (Jarvis, 2004, p. 18)

This philosophy for a learning society was expressed by Jarvis as a society that "is both democratic and egalitarian: one in which individuals can fulfill their own potential throughout



the whole of their lives through education and learning, for which school is but a preparatory mechanism (Jarvis, p. 18). He questioned the powers that were hinting that political leaders may not have been heading toward the vision of a learning society.

The literature reflects that European governments seem to have been moving toward a learning society at a faster pace than other nations, notably the United States. In 1996 the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) released the following statement as an introduction to their report: “Success in realizing lifelong learning—from early childhood education to active learning retirement – will be an important factor in promoting employment, economic development, democracy, and social cohesion in the years ahead” (“Organization”). In the abstract of a journal article, “The Development of a System Supporting the Lifelong Learner,” Freitas, et al. (2006) wrote:

Given the rapidly changing skills needs of the “post-industrial economies,” lifelong learning forms an integral part of the government policy with the UK and abroad. However, like the UK, most economies are faced with the problem of how to reach those sections of the community that have traditionally not embraced learning and educational opportunities. (Freitas et al., Abstract)

Further in the article, the authors emphasized the concept of career changing quickly from a linear model to a more holistic model of the individual’s life and work experience and he noted that the issue is echoed internationally (Freitas, et al.).

Several foreign countries are following the lead of the United Kingdom. In 2006, Jamaica held its third annual Conference on Lifelong Learning. The main speaker, Fryer, expounded that “learning should not be the sole prerogative of educational institutions but should be a way of life” (as cited in Cayol, 2006, The Editor) The Jamaican Minister of Education and Youth, Maxine Henry Wilson, explained that Jamaicans must “sustain a culture of lifelong learning in order to bring about a transformation in the society” (“All Jamaicans,” 2006).

The Russian News & Information Agency (RIA Novosti) released a statement in reference to education and lifelong learning after the July 2006 G8 summit in St. Petersburg. The press release reported:

Education is becoming a quickly growing and promising sector of the economy in our pragmatic world. The Cologne Charter put the trend on paper, proclaiming “lifelong learning” as a new educational concept to replace the traditional three-level (primary-general- higher) education. It is difficult to comprehend, but hundreds of millions, and possibly billions, of people born in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century will never hear the symbolic last bell marking school graduation. (Filippov, 2006)

Further, the press release concluded that lifelong learning was a logical consequence of globalization and the postmodern information age. In 2006, similar statements were made in news releases from Australia, Kosovo, Canada, Thailand, the Czech Republic, and Scotland.

### Lifelong Learning

In simple terms, lifelong learning is learning for a lifetime; however, “learning is an elusive phenomenon” (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005, p.16) with learning theorists proposing various definitions. For example, learning is defined in *The Adult Learner: The definitive classic in adult education and human resource development* (2005) as “the act or process by which behavioral change, knowledge, skills, and attitudes are acquired” (Boyd et al.) and “learning is a change in the individual, due to the interaction of that individual and his environment, which fills a need and makes him more capable of dealing adequately with his environment” (Burton, 1963) and learning is “the process of gaining knowledge and/or expertise” (Knowles et al., p. 17). Lifelong is the continuous span of life from birth until death, generally thought of by educators as from childhood through adulthood. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the phenomenon of lifelong learning is defined as a process of acquiring knowledge and expertise from childhood through adulthood.

The concept of lifelong learning is complex. Numerous books, journal articles, and studies on andragogy, adult education, adult learning, and lifelong learning that thoroughly investigate and document the history and progression of the adult learning field and the various studies related to life span learning have been written under the conceptual framework of human development as it pertains to learning and teaching. For a deep understanding of lifelong learning, I reviewed a number of guides, pamphlets, journal articles (scholarly and practical) of lifelong learning and adult education as well as five comprehensive books on lifelong learning by the following adult education scholars: Malcolm Knowles, Elwood Holton III, and Richard Swanson (2005), Peter Jarvis (2004), Roger Hiemstra (2002), Sharran Merriam and Rosemary Caffarella (1999), and Richard Peterson and Associates (1973).

Malcolm S. Knowles, the “Father of Andragogy” in the United States, published the first edition of *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species* in 1973. Although Knowles died in 1997, a recent sixth edition of *The Adult Learner: The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development*, by Malcolm Knowles, Elwood Holton III, and Richard Swanson (2005) provided a text that effectively describes the roots and principles of andragogy, adult learning theories, detailed analysis of the theoretical framework for understanding adult learning issues, and current advancements in adult learning.

In 1983, Peter Jarvis published a comprehensive book on *Adult Education* and in, 2004, he presented a thoroughly revised and updated third edition, *Adult Education & Lifelong Learning: Theory and Practice*. This edition provided a rationale for the provision of learning opportunities for adults under the conceptual framework for lifelong learning with a meticulous review of adult learning, theorists’ perspectives, with current practices, theory, and updated research regarding adult teaching and learning. He also included information on adult education

in the United Kingdom (U.K.), the European Union, the United States, and he included references to other global regions.

Roger Hiemstra published a third edition of his *Lifelong Learning: An Exploration of Adult and Continuing Education Within a Setting of Lifelong Learning Needs* in 2002, as an updated version in order to present the growth and maturation of the adult education field since the 1976 publication of his first book, *The Lifelong Learner*. He wrote the book to serve as a resource that contained historical and updated information, annotated citations, and statistical data.

Sharan B. Merriam and Rosemary S. Caffarella published an exhaustive first edition of *Learning in Adulthood* in 1991 and a second edition in 1999. This book provided a single, comprehensive, up-to-date text based on adult learning research and theory, including sociological, philosophical, critical social theory, and psychological approaches. Merriam and Caffarella intended that their book to benefit adult learning practioners.

An earlier book, *Lifelong Learning in America* by Richard E. Peterson and Associates (1979) presented an overview of then-current adult education practices, available resources, and future prospects for adult education in America. Peterson wrote of a change in the traditional patterns of family and work life that saw women enter the workforce in unprecedented numbers, workers make mid-career changes, workers respond to technological advances, and workers experience widespread bewilderment and dissatisfaction with work. He referred to “widespread dissatisfaction—with work lives, with personal lives, with political institutions, with so-called human services, [and] with schools and colleges” (Peterson, p. 2). Although he wrote that it was difficult to predict the future, he did present a need for “learning new things at various points in one’s life” and the need for continuing education.

Peterson maintained that “the aging population, the changes individuals are experiencing in their lives, the disjointed educational system—have kindled a widespread feeling that some new concept, some new lens, is needed for viewing the totality of education and learning in the United States” (Peterson, p. 3). He set forth the idea that lifelong learning had emerged as the new concept—the new lens. The United States followed European countries and several African nations with the effort to practice the concept of “universal adult education, education permanent, recurrent education, and lifelong education” (Peterson, p. 3).

These texts impart a thoroughly researched historical perspective on adult and lifelong learning. Other early, often quoted and well-recognized authors and contributors to the field of adult education, include Lindeman (1926) and Yeaxlee (1929, 1961).

As discussed by Ronald Gross (1999) in *Peak Learning*, learning throughout the lifetime is the key to successful living. This is especially significant in a rapidly changing workplace situation. It is common knowledge that education and skills do not last a lifetime unless updated frequently with new information. Gross quoted Alvin Toffler as agreeing that “in the world of the future, the new illiterate will be the person who has not learned how to learn” (Gross, p. 5).

Lifelong learning is not a new concept (Yeaxlee, 1929), but the globalization of the world, rapidly changing workplace, and the aging population of America have pressed the need for acceptance of a philosophy of lifelong learning as a national priority. Therefore, as philosophers and theologians have studied the nature of humankind for centuries, it seems relevant to agree with Jarvis and Walters (1993) who claim “that human beings are active participants in the learning process throughout the whole of life and that the reason for this lies both in their nature and in their relationship with the wider society” (Jarvis, 2004, p. 24).

### Lifelong Learning as a Concept

In the ancient times of Plato and Aristotle, learning was considered to be an adult experience. Aristotle was referenced by Jarvis (2004) as associating wisdom with experience and a long life. In an online version of *Lifelong learning: An exploration of adult and continuing education within a setting of lifelong learning needs* Roger Hiemstra (2002) wrote that the “notable societies that developed in Greece, Rome, Europe, and Great Britain facilitated study, expression in the arts, and personal growth for the elite or privileged person throughout his or her life. Thus, it can be argued that adult education has always been a natural part of civilization” (Hiemstra).

In the United States, informal learning was a necessity for the pioneers, with formal education available for the members of elite society in private schools or by tutors. As the population grew with the large influx of immigrants, public and private education provided general formal education, while informal education was provided by family, peers, practitioners, and nonformally by libraries, clubs, government agencies, the military and other organizations. Prior to the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, formal systematic education was limited to a relatively small number of people; however, learning was considered to be a lifelong activity. As noted by Houle (1984), individuals (mainly men) who were interested in scholarship used their own competence to engage in learning either alone or in groups and they used whatever resources that were available to them.

Since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, a more formal systematic education became available in the United States, including the rise of educational opportunities for adults. Below is a list of important dates and events for the adult education movement in the United States. The list is based on an annotated timeline constructed for the years 1727 – 1976 by Hiemstra (2002). The

listings from 1976 until 2005 were compiled for this study based on a thorough review of the adult education movement presented on the U.S Government Educational web site at Ed.gov. as accessed on March 7, 2007:

- 1727 The Junto established by Benjamin Franklin
- 1826 The first lyceum at Millbury, MA. Organized by Josiah Holbrook
- 1833 The first tax supported library at Peterborough, NH
- 1862 Two events: the beginning of the U.S. Dept of Agriculture and The Land Grant Act
- 1874 The Chautauqua Institution, Chautauqua, NY
- 1911 The State Board of Vocational and Adult Education established in Wisconsin
- 1914 The Smith-Lever Act launched vocational education in public schools for adults and youth above age fourteen
- 1918 The first full time state supervisors of adult education appointed in NY and SC
- 1924 The National Education Association created its Department of Adult Education
- 1926 American Association of Adult Education organized
- 1933 The Federal Emergency Relief Administration
- 1935 The Works Progress Administration
- 1936 Federal forum project inaugurated by the U.S. Office of Education
- 1942 The US Armed Forces Institute established
- 1947 The first session of the National Training Laboratory in Bethel, Maine
- 1951 Formation of the Fund for Adult Education
- 1951 Founding of the Adult Education Association of the USA
- 1952 Organization of the National Association of Public School Adult Education
- 1964 The Economic Opportunity Act Title II, Part B (Public Law 88-452)
- 1965 The Higher Education Act
- 1966 The Adult Education Act of 1966 (and 1970)
- 1969 The Galaxie Conference on Adult Education - Washington DC
- 1972 The National Adult Education Think Tank Project - through 1974
- 1976 The Lifelong Learning Amendment  
(Hiemstra, 2002)
- 1979 U.S. Department of Education created
- 1980 Congress established Department of Education as a Cabinet level agency
- 1986 Higher Education Act: Long Term Continuing Resolution, signed October 18, 1986 continued provisions of the Adult Education Act (P.L. 89-750). On December 22, 1987 a permanent continuing resolution (P.L. 100-202) was passed.
- 1988 Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998  
(Perkins III) authorizes the establishment of America's Career Resource Network (ACRN) to support career guidance and academic counseling programs at the local level. Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Amendments Act of 1988 (Public Law 100-628) extended for two additional years programs providing assistance to the homeless, including literacy training for homeless adults and education for homeless youths.

- 1991 National Literacy Act of 1991 (Public Law 102-73) established the National Institute for Literacy, the National Institute Board, and the Interagency Task Force on Literacy. Amended various federal laws to establish and extend various literacy programs.
- 1998 Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-220) enacted the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and substantially revised and extended, through fiscal year 2003, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- 2001 September 11, 2001 terrorist event changed security and travel in U.S. This was a globally shocking incident that changed American society.
- 2005 American competitiveness Initiative (ACI).  
(ED.gov, 2006)

In addition, the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1890 barred racial discrimination but allowed funds if separate A&M colleges were established for whites and blacks. This listing of the adult education movement covered only the more formal, institutional types of educational learning events. As explained by adult educators and learning theorists, learning occurs in other types of situations and it is referred to as formal, informal, and nonformal (self-directed) learning.

Although the notion of informal adult education was recognized before Malcolm Knowles' (1950) book, *Informal Adult Education*, he was the person who studied and conceptualized adult education and learning with a division between informal learning and formal learning. He commented that "an organized course is usually a better instrument for new learning of an intensive nature, while a club experience provides the best opportunity for practicing and refining the things learned" (as cited in Merriam & Brockett, 1997, p.23).

In *Informal Adult Education*, Knowles contrasted informal education and formal education as:

Formal programs are those sponsored for the most part by established educational institutions, such as universities, high school, and trade schools. While many adults participate in the courses without working for credit, they are organized essentially for credit students . . . Informal classes, on the other hand, are generally fitted into more general programs of such organizations as the YMCA and YWCA, community centers, labor unions, industries, and churches. (as cited in Merriam & Brockett, 1997, p. 23)



Combs, Prosser, and Ahmed (1973) added another type of learning to Knowles' list. They proposed the three types of opportunities as a framework for adult learning. They proposed that learning occurred in formal institutional settings, informal, and nonformal settings (as cited in Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Later, Merriam and Caffarella added the concept that informal learning was self-directed learning. They explained that all three categories were of "equal importance in the adult learning enterprise" and that there would "always be overlaps" among the categories (p. 26).

Merriam and Caffarella (1999) found that formal learning occurred in numerous places and in various forms—from well-organized instructional forums to individual or group learning through the use of various interactive technologies. Building on the work of Knowles (1964), Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) described four types of formal educational situations: 1) Independent adult organizations that may have been community based (such as learning exchanges, grassroots organizations), private organizations (such as Literacy Volunteers of America), or proprietary schools or residential centers (such as Highlander Center for Research and Education); 2) Educational institutions that included public schools and postsecondary institutions (Empire State College in New York) and online institutions; 3) Quasi-educational organizations that may have been public or private and that consider education of the public as an important part of their mission (such as libraries, museums, mass media); and, 4) Non-educational organizations that were similar to quasi-educational organizations except that the education is a means to an end and the education was more geared to the organization's group in some cases to make a profit for the organization (training, personal development, the armed forces) (Merriam & Brockett, 1997, p. 28).

Merriam and Caffarella (1999) described nonformal education as learning opportunities outside of formal educational settings. Typically, nonformal education was classified as being “less structured and more flexible” and more “responsive to localized needs” (literacy initiatives, community development). Another type of learning, indigenous learning, was categorized in nonformal educational settings (Brennan, 1997) so the implication was that nonformal education could be either community-based or indigenous-based (Brennan, 1997; Merriam & Caffarella).

As distinguished from formal and nonformal, informal education, or self-directed learning, is learning that occurs in “natural settings and is initiated and carried through primarily by the learners themselves (Candy, 1991; Combs, 1985; Merriam & Brockett, 1997). Some examples referred to by Merriam (1999) included hobbies like model railroads and information gathered for a purpose; for example, to gain knowledge about breast cancer or some other topic for one’s own information.

One of the pioneers in adult education, Houle, published the results of a small study that surveyed adults engaged in learning and he identified three separate learning orientations held by adults. In the publication *The Inquiring Mind*, Houle (1961) listed the learning orientations as consisting of goal-oriented learners, activity-oriented learners, and learning-oriented learners. Others (Boshier, 1971; Burgess, 1971; Sheffield, 1964) developed scales that combined Houle’s factors to cluster the categories. Subsequently, Morstain and Smart (1974) extended Houle’s list of reasons adults engage in learning to include: social relationships, external expectations, social welfare, professional advancement, escape and stimulation, and cognitive interest (as cited in Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 54).

According to Jarvis (2004), Johnstone and Rivera’s research revealed that millions of Americans were participating in self-education. These lifelong learners were not using

institutional educational services; instead, they were participating in projects under their own direction. Jarvis included a note from a study by Tough (1979) reporting research that “suggested that self-directed education is even more common than Johnstone and Rivera indicated” (as cited in Jarvis, p. 33).

Throughout the adult life span, as reported, there are numerous opportunities for informal learning with increased leisure time for the enjoyment of informal learning. For instance, Jarvis (2004) pointed out the tendency for more educated people to seek learning opportunities and he suggested that these include libraries, museums, radio, television, the arts, and travel. According to Jarvis, adult educators have noted the significance of informal learning opportunities with a number of studies published in this field by Chadwick, 1980; Dadswell, 1978; Dale, 1980; and Surridge and Bowen, 1977 (p. 30).

Jarvis (2004) wrote that R.S. Peters, an English philosopher of education, had claimed that “to be an educated person is not to have arrived but to travel with a different view during life. . .the educated person is both educated and being educated throughout the whole of his [or her] life” (p. 41). On the other hand, Jarvis contended that “Many different learning processes occur during the human lifespan, but not all of them may be considered education, since any definition necessarily excludes as well as includes” (p. 43).

#### Adult Learners in America

Although scholars and others in the United States have made reports and completed studies that called for a new order of technically-sophisticated learning organizations and the transformation of American educational institutions from traditional education to learning societies, the term “lifelong learning” generally has been used in reference to continuing education (usually leisurely) for the aging adult population. The increasing proportion of the

older adult population has led to an increased desire for learning programs for the older adult population in American society. With reports such as the Kellogg Commission report, the general public has somewhat recognized the need for the emergence of new learning societies and a holistic approach to learning for a lifetime for the youth of America. The end result may be increased interest in developing new avenues for lifelong learning from childhood through older adulthood. One method of study on this issue may be to follow the example of people who are lifelong learners, and to look at a holistic view of education through the lens of biography or life histories.

For example, recent general media information on healthy living in the United States has suggested that along with proper nutrition and exercise, stimulation of the brain assisted older adults with better memory and brain function. With the rising population of older Americans, lifelong learning has been reported to be beneficial for a higher quality of life among this population.

Paul Nussbaum, a professor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, presented a report at the American Society on Aging Annual Meeting in 1999 that had dramatic implications for connecting aging with education. At the meeting Nussbaum explained, “Carefully conducted studies are now providing data that points to the possibility that learning may be a recipe for prevention of disease” (Goggin, 1999, p. 1). Other new theories developed from the research indicated that “education acts as a surrogate for the important environmental experiences that build brain cells” and “the direct effect of education on brain structure continues throughout life” (p. 1). Additionally, as reported by Goggin, due to the implications of these findings, it appeared that education should continue from childhood through old age. Thus, as

presented, “Nussbaum believes that policymakers will need to think about education in new terms” (Implications and Visions).

The United States National Institute on Aging (NIA) has led the federal effort on aging research. On March 6, 2006, the NIA reported that the “face of aging in the United States is changing dramatically and rapidly . . . Today’s older Americans are very different from their predecessors, living longer, having lower rates of disability, achieving higher levels of education, and less often living in poverty” (*Dramatic Changes*, 2006). Further, the NIA report identified trends in aging Americans:

- 1) The United States population aged 65 and over is expected to double in size within the next 25 years. By 2030, almost 1 out of every 5 Americans – some 72 million people – will be 65 years or older. The age group 85 and older is now the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population.
  - 2) The health of older Americans is improving. Still many are disabled and suffer from chronic conditions. . .
  - 3) The financial circumstances of older people have improved dramatically, although there are wide variations in income and wealth.
  - 4) Geographically, Florida (17.6 %), Pennsylvania (15.6%) and West Virginia (15.3%) are the “oldest” states, with the highest percentages of people aged 65 and older. . .
  - 5) Higher levels of education, which are linked to better health, higher income, more wealth, and a higher standard of living in retirement, will continue to increase among people 65 and older. The proportion of Americans with at least a bachelor’s degree grew five-fold from 1950 – 2003, from 3.4% to 17.4%, and by 2030, more than one-fourth of the older population is expected to have an undergraduate degree. The percentage completing high school quadrupled between 1950 and 2003, from 17.0% to 71.5%.
  - 6) As the United States as a whole grows more diverse, so does the population aged 65 and older. . .
  - 7) Changes in the American family have significant implications for future aging. . .
- (*Dramatic Changes*)

Further, Suzman (2006) suggested that this report presented a portrait of the trends for the future.

Velkoff (2006), chief of the Aging Studies Branch at the U. S. Bureau of Census, noted that

“People 65 and over are a very diverse group. How they experience aging depends on a variety

of interacting factors – from gender and race/ethnicity to health, education, socioeconomic, and family circumstances” (*Dramatic Changes*, 2006).

The report detailed the population of the United States as growing older in future decades, “average life expectancy at birth in 2000 was 76.9 years; females could expect to live an average of 5.4 years longer than men” (*Dramatic Changes*, 2006). Importantly for this study, the report found a strong correlation between education and health,

Older adults are increasingly more educated, and this continuing trend could have a positive effect on the health of older people in the future: By 2030, more than one-fourth of the older population is expected to have at least a bachelor’s degree, and the percentage of older women with a bachelor’s degree will likely double, from 13.4 percent in 2003 to 27.8 percent in 2030. (*Dramatic Changes*)

Another report that supported the trends for this study was published by the American Association of Retired People (AARP), the nation’s leading organization of people age 50 and older. The AARP mission is to serve the needs and interests of their members through information and education, research, advocacy, and community services. On July 19, 2000, the AARP issued a report on a survey that linked aging and lifelong learning. The AARP Survey on Lifelong Learning, the first national survey of learning preferences among Americans age 50 and older, revealed the typical learning methods, learning motivations, learning interests, and the life-event contexts in which the learning takes place. The AARP commissioned Harris Interactive, Inc. to conduct the survey. The survey included 1,019 people age 50 and older, and the key findings included:

- 1) Newspapers, magazines, books, and journals are the tools used for learning most of the time by adults age 50 and older regardless of age, gender, income, or education.
- 2) More respondents interviewed online typically use online techniques than those interviewed by telephone.
- 3) Reflective and hands-on approaches are among the best ways for older adults to learn.
- 4) Older adults are interested in learning so that they can keep in touch with themselves, their community, and the world.

- 5) Older adults' preferred learning formats that vary according to the topic under study. However, for 11 of the 17 topics about which they were asked, respondents expressed preferences for three of eight formats: learning in loosely-structured groups, in workshop settings, or by teaching themselves.
- 6) Adults 50 and older are eager to use what they learn, want to have at least some control over the learning process, and are typically willing to spend modest sums of money to learn.
- 7) Older adult learners experience different life events at different stages. Respondents between 50 and 59 are somewhat more likely than older ones to have experienced these family-related events or new accomplishments.
- 8) Over half of adult learners surveyed (53%) say they experienced at least one event with a major impact in their life in the past 12 months. Of those experiencing a major event, health-related and care-giving events had the greatest reported impact on their everyday lives.

*(AARP survey on lifelong learning: Research report, 2006)*

A summary of this report concluded that lifelong learning experiences that would likely appeal to mature adults would include subjects that are personally meaningful and taught in environments that provide a direct learning experience; that allow adults control over all aspects of the learning process; and that are not too expensive. This report confirmed Knowles' (1984) concept of andragogy and Vella's (2002) 12 principles of adult learning. For example, the importance and relevancy of the learning for adults age 50 and older that chose to learn for the simple joy of learning, to enhance their spiritual or personal growth, and to keep up with what is going on in the world merged with the five assumptions that Knowles proposed in his concept of andragogy:

1. As a person matures, his or her self-concept moves from that of a dependent personality toward one of a self-directing human being.
2. An adult accumulates a growing reservoir of experience, which is a rich resource for learning.
3. The readiness of an adult to learn is closely related to the developmental tasks of his or her social role.
4. There is a change in time perspective as people mature—from future application of knowledge to immediacy of application. Thus an adult is more problem centered than subject centered in learning.
5. Adults are motivated to learn by internal factors rather than external ones. (Knowles and Associates, 1984, pp. 9-12)

(as cited in Merriam & Caffarella, 1999)

Additionally, the key findings presented in the AARP report confirmed several of Vella's principles: needs assessment; safety; sound relationships; sequence of content and reinforcement; learning with ideas, feelings, and action; immediacy; clear roles and role development; teamwork, praxis – action with reflection; respect for learners as decision makers; engagement; and, accountability (Vella). These key findings were rather universal – large proportions of men and women, those from different economic and educational backgrounds, and from different age groups expressed agreement with these reasons for learning (*AARP survey on lifelong learning: Research report*, 2006).

According to the National Retired Teachers Association (NRTA) quarterly publication, *Live and Learn* (2004), the traditional retirement community activities used to be bingo, Bible study, and birthdays; however, retirement communities today boast of activities such as biology, basketball, ballet, and biostatistics. As contended in this study, older people appeared to be concerned with lifelong learning. The August 31, 2004, press release identified distinct new types of community housing for an older population that was centered around lifelong learning (*Features in NRTA live & learn: News release*) as being a new trend in retirement living.

As specified in an NIA press release, (2006), a report published online in *Alzheimer's and Dementia: The Journal of the Alzheimer's Association*, recommends intensifying strategies to preserve brain health as people age. The suggestions for maintaining or enhancing cognitive and emotional function included education [lifelong learning], cardiovascular health, and physical activity as being associated with [good] brain health (*National Institute*). Education was one of the areas listed as playing a role toward maintaining brain health, "Higher levels of education correlate with both good cognitive and emotional function in the scientific literature" (*National*



*Institute*); however, there was no consensus as to why this may be so. Researchers are expected to explore the explanation in future studies.

An article, “The Best Talk In Town,” posted on the AARP.org website by Ciabattari (2006) stated that lifelong learning institutes sponsored by colleges and universities have provided an opportunity for older adults to attend classes and stimulate brain health. Referenced as an example, in 1977, Dean Michael Shinagel founded the Harvard Institute for Learning in Retirement (HILR) as a peer-learning, self-governing membership organization with a limit of 500 members. Ciabattari wrote that one retired English teacher from Marblehead, MA, Nancy Sack, took early retirement 25 years ago and found intellectual stimulation when she joined the HILR. Sack credited HILR as being rewarding and it became the focus of her retirement. The HILR had developed 50 courses each semester that were taught and taken because the participants enjoyed taking them (Ciabattari).

Further, Ciabattari (2006) reported there were more than 500 lifelong learning institutes sponsored by colleges and universities that provide classroom space, library privileges, and an academic umbrella for lifelong learning organizations. The director of the Osher Institute for Learning in Retirement at Duke (OLLI), Sara Craven, responded that they have 1200 people in their program with a chorus, a band, and a small chamber group, and that they have recently had popular seminar topics on Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt. Another lifelong learning organization, the PLATO Society of UCLA, provided Maria Kornet the opportunity to pursue her lifelong love of literature and art. California State University’s peer learning provided a rich life experience for John Andrew, president of the Renaissance Society, a lifelong learning institute (Ciabattari, 2006).

As stated by Harvard's Dean Shinagel, "The fastest growing cohort in the U.S. population is people over 85 . . . With 77 million baby boomers approaching retirement, lifelong learning will be an important movement in the 21<sup>st</sup> century" (Ciabattari, 2006, *Techie Boomers*). Ciabattari further wrote that since 2002 the San Francisco-based Benard Osher Foundation has donated \$1 million-plus grants to 73 lifelong institutes in 30 states with the goal of granting funds to lifelong learning institutions in all 50 states. The learners at these institutions have tended to be "focused on intrinsic goals . . . and they tend to see themselves as co-learners, willing to invest time in developing a sense of community—perhaps because teachers and students share similar ages and life experiences" (Ciabattari, 2006, *Techie Boomers*). Lightfoot (2006), executive director at the Osher Center at the University of Southern Maine, was quoted as commenting:

The lifelong learners here and in the national Osher network are the embodiment of 'positive aging' with the emphasis on strengths rather than deficits . . . they [lifelong learners] are intellectually curious, looking to the future rather than dwelling in the past, and convinced they can make a difference in their own and other people's lives. (as cited in Ciabattari, 2006, *Techie Boomers*)

Additionally, Ciabattari quoted people from various states and various ages including a 93-year-old lifelong learner who was excited to be learning. There have been other lifelong learning organizations that provided older adult learners with opportunities to share educational experiences that led to life satisfaction. One of the organizations is Elderhostel. According to their web page:

We are a not-for-profit organization that provides exceptional learning adventures to nearly 160,000 older adults each year. Elderhostel offers nearly 8,000 programs a year in more than 90 countries.

We believe learning is a lifelong pursuit that opens minds and enriches lives. We believe sharing new ideas, challenges and experiences is rewarding in every season of life. Our participants come from every walk of life to learn together, to exchange ideas, and to explore the world. (*Elderhostel*, 2007)

The concept of increasing programs for lifelong learning has expanded in recent years. For instance, Field (2006) in “Federal Panel on Higher Education Identifies Access and Lifelong Learning as Top Goals for Final Report” reported that the Commission on the Future of Higher Education in the United States had identified their top goals for the future. Field listed improvement of the commitment to lifelong learning and workforce development as one of the goals and included a statement that George R. Boggs, President of the American Association of Community Colleges, was pleased with the focus on lifelong learning (Field, 2006).

As the world view of lifelong learning and the American concept of lifelong learning merge, the result may be a new philosophy toward learning ---the embedded idea of learning for a lifetime. How will a new learning philosophy emerge in America?

In America, the trend is for people to live longer lives and each person has the opportunity to choose how he or she will live. As expressed by Hayes (1998), “that each of us holds the key to our own world is a profoundly simple idea, but it could be the most formidable barrier to living any of us will ever face” (p. 7). The key to living a meaningful, successful, and satisfying life belongs to each individual. Hayes claimed that, “People who lead a satisfying life, who are in tune with their past and with their future—in short, people whom we would call ‘happy’ are generally people who have lived their lives according to rules they themselves created” (p. 42). Thus, the research suggests the notion that the key to living a meaningful, successful, and satisfying life belongs to each individual.

## Adult Learning and Transformational Development

Merriam and Cafferella (1999) explored four developmental characteristics of adults that they identified as being most clearly related to learning. The four developmental characteristics listed were:

1. The biological perspective that acknowledged the physical aging process brought on by the natural mechanisms of aging as well as environmental influences, health habits, and diseases;
2. The psychological perspective that was grouped into three categories; sequential, live events and transitions, and relational;
3. The socio-cultural perspective in adulthood was determined by contextual influences, such as social, economic, and historical factors highlighting the importance of social roles constructed by the concepts of race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation; and
4. The integrative approach acknowledged the intersections among the biological, psychological, and socio-cultural perspectives of learning in adulthood. (Merriam & Cafferella, p. 90)

Further, Merriam and Cafferella (1999) listed models of adult cognitive developmental learning (how adults think) that included a contextual perspective (a perspective gaining prominence), dialectical thinking (tolerance for contradictions and ambiguity), and wisdom, a hallmark of mature adult thought (p. 91).

The most referenced sequential theorist, Erikson, identified eight stages of development from childhood to adulthood. He suggested that as humans matured, if their motivation became intrinsic, they focused on being inward-out, and if people reached the seventh developmental stage (generativity), they developed a sincere desire to pass on the wisdom they had gained through living to future generations (as cited in Hayes, 1998).

Merriam and Caffarella (1999) expounded that wisdom was the hallmark of adult thinking: “wisdom is often seen as the pinnacle or hallmark of adult thinking” (p. 161). However, they explained that this wisdom of the ages continues to be a “fluid and elusive idea, which is

most often characterized by the acceptance of ambiguity, as one of its many virtues” (p.161).

Even though wisdom is an elusive idea, many researchers agreed that “wisdom is the province of adulthood, although older is not always equated with wiser” (p.161). Merriam and Caffarella quoted a study by Sternberg (1986b) involving lay persons and specialists in which both groups perceived interrelatedness between intelligence, wisdom, and creativity (p. 163).

Erikson (1988) connected creativity to wisdom and delineated 10 attributes of wisdom as Merriam and Caffarella summarized into four sections:

1. interdependence and interrelatedness. In her mind, the “wise elder has learned to understand interdependence, the ecology of living with others . . . Human beings need one another, and their vital involvement in relationships nourishes and sustains the whole cycle of life”;
2. humor, it is humor – “healing, enlivening laughter that keeps human feet firmly on the ground (humus). The world being full of incongruities, perplexity would surely be overwhelming if humor abandoned us . . . When we can even see ourselves as funny, it eases this daily living in such a close proximity with ourselves;
3. a sense of complexity of living. A wise person embraces the “sense of the complexity of living, of relationships, of all negotiations. There is certainly no immediate, discernible, and absolute right and wrong, just as light and dark are separated by innumerable shadings . . . [The] interweaving of time and space, light and dark, and the complexity of human nature suggests that . . . this wholeness of perception to be even partially realized, must of necessity be made up of a merging of the sensual, the logical, and the aesthetic perceptions of the individual;
4. caritas. There is “an attitude of wisdom that seems of great importance which can be described as non-possessive attachment. It is possible to care for and about things, and of course individuals as well as this green earth, without dominating anything. . . The wise old man or woman learns to go lightly, receive gratefully, release easily, in order to feel as unfettered as possible. Loss is inevitable, so holding on is defeating. (Erikson, 1988, as cited in Merriam and Caffarella, pp. 163-164)

Whether based on the biological, psychological, sociocultural, or integrative theory of adult learning development, cognitive development, dialectical thinking, or wisdom, the connection that links adult learning to living long and well was having the ability to transition successfully from one point in life to another point in life. Under the framework of adult learning, the literature implied that it was a combination of an individual’s life history, culture

and value system, and the interaction among family, school, social, and spiritual experiences that led to enriched, developed mature thinkers.

Mazlow (1970) developed a ladder of hierarchy of needs beginning with safety, affection, and esteem with the goal of learning to be self-actualized. Self-actualization was described as having ‘the full use of talents, capacities, potentialities, etc’ (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005, p. 14).

Most recently, Covey (2006) described the type of person who seemed to fit into the general category of a lifelong learner or a person who had reached the level of self-actualization and wisdom. In *Everyday Greatness*, Covey explained this type of person as “good people” as people whose lives are “filled with integrity and moral fortitude . . . have intentions that are honorable . . . those who do their best to provide sustenance and nurturance for their children,” and those who are “rich in character and committed to make a difference – each in their own unique way” (p. VII). Covey contended that the majority of people in the world were good, even though the world was “in commotion with a forecast for future turbulence and he proposed that people should be on an advancing pathway moving toward doing their best to be what he termed as transition persons” (p. IX).

Covey described a transition person as “one who breaks the flow of bad—the negative traditions or harmful practices that get passed from generation to generation, or from situation to situation, whether in a family, a workplace, a community, or wherever” (p. IX). Additionally, the description Covey explained that a transition person “transcends” his or her own needs and displays “noble” characteristics. A transition person is a “catalyst for change” and a “healer” rather than a “victim” or a “carrier” (p. IX). As identified by Covey, the influence of a transition person is evident and the effect on family and society is positive.

Further, as explained by Covey (2006), transition people live in “everyday greatness” as a way of life – living by the “goodness” that radiates from the person who is motivated more by humble, small, and simple good deeds than grandiose accomplishments (p. X). The transition person that Covey identified sought to make a positive contribution to society by making three life decisions; the choice to act, the choice to live with purpose, and the choice to live with principles. Covey proposed that a transition person living with these principles enjoyed “a life that is rich in meaning and progress – a life of Everyday Greatness” (p. XIII). The principles mentioned by Covey include vision, innovation, humility, quality, empathy, magnanimity, perseverance, and balance. He speculated that living with these principles led people toward “greater personal effectiveness and increased life satisfaction” (p. IX).

Overall, the implications and predictions made by the adult education and lifelong learning experts illuminated the need for all learning (informal, formal, and nonformal) to be a process of education that begins in childhood and continues throughout adulthood as lifetime learning. Hayes (1998) explained, “More and more we hear the term ‘lifelong learning’ used in connection with the kind of learning required to earn a living, but this misses the point . . . knowledge sought critically and passionately, for its own sake, gives purpose and meaning to life” (p. xiii). Consequently, Hayes expressed the notion that the “. . .quality of life hinges on continuous learning . . . Continuous, self-directed learning is the greatest means we have to navigate our way through life . . . [and] learning becomes the greatest act of self-determination” (p. xiii).

## Educational Biography

*Life is a learning process.*

Dominicé

Kridel's (1998) book, *Writing Educational Biography*, stated that, "The study of biography is slowly emerging as a significant development in the field of educational leadership . . . Indeed, biography and life history, in a variety of forms are basic to qualitative research" (p. 3). Most biographers have regarded a simple definition of biography as "a record of life," thus an educational biography was described as "representative works of biographical subjects from the field of education" (p. 8). Hence, this led to the assumption that an educational biography could provide an insight to lifelong learning.

The study of life histories was not a new idea, as it had "existed in Greek culture five centuries before Christ" and a number of styles of autobiography and biography were written throughout ancient and modern history. Augustine, Rousseau, Abelard, Montaigne, and Loyola are a few of the prominent life histories noted in *Learning From Our Lives* (Dominicé, 2000). Certainly, today millions of biographies and autobiographies are sold each year.

Kridel (1998) observed that biographical inquiry provided a "fresh perspective on and new possibilities and dimensions for education –new ways to examine how one describes the behavior of others, new ways to appraise the impact of the pedagogical process on students and teachers, new ways to explain how educational policy manifests itself in the lives of individuals" (p. 4).

As reported by Dominicé (2000), biography had been used as a research tool by anthropologists, psychologists, sociologists, and historians, with their various disciplines using theoretical and methodological research approaches based on their fields of study. In the field of adult and continuing education, Gaston Pineau and Pierre Dominicé conducted the "pioneering



work to identify the possible contributions of life history to adult education” and they built the “appropriate methodology” (p. 40) in this field since the 1980s. Two organizations, the International Association for Life History Applied to Adult Education (ASIHVIF) and the European Society for Research in the Education of Adults (ESREA), were created for the purpose of creating networks of adult educators and researchers.

In the United States, conversations and presentations of the Archival and Biographical Research Special Interest Group (SIG) of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) led to having invited speakers, conferences, and award presentations that eventually led to the publication of *Writing Educational Biography* (Kridel, 1998).

While researching the process of adult learners using educational biography to improve their understanding of the learning process, Dominicé and his European colleagues were at the forefront of educational biography and provided the rationale for professionals to strengthen their use of educational biography by reflecting on authentic learning experiences in order to extract meaning and enhance their understanding of learning. As defined by Dominicé, in *Learning From Our Lives, 2000*, “educational biography is an adult education approach that emphasizes the subjective meanings and the developmental process of adult learning” (p. xiii). Kridel (1997) stated that the purpose of his book on writing educational biography was to “emphasize that the self-examination of a biographer – those typical documentary, interpretive, and literary concerns of biography – can enhance and enrich the practice of educational research (p. 5).

Dominicé (2000) stressed the point that “through oral and written narratives, educational biography offers the values of reminiscence and the interpretation of experience and influences upon that experience” (p. xv). While his approach was founded on adults’ reviewing their own personal educational experience and learn to guide their learning, it is obvious that educational

biography may be useful as a tool to research and examine the lives of individual adult learners to glean insight toward their learning experiences for the purpose of recognizing the characteristics and traits that lead one to become a lifelong learner.

The literature review indicated that educational biography allowed readers to become aware of the impact of formal, nonformal, and informal learning experiences so that they could analyze the total learning experience and gain useful insight into the learning process. Dominicé (2000) suggested that the educational biography could “guide adults’ inquiry into the many influences on and results from their learning experiences, helping them understand how these influences and results relate to the complexities of their lives” (p. xvi).

The literature pointed out that through the process of exploring the life of an individual, one can gain understanding regarding the situations that benefit or hinder the learning process. The study of the life history and activities of an individual provides the opportunity for reflection of the “dialectic between the personal and the social aspects of learning” (Dominicé, 2000, p. xvii) as the biographer examines the process of formal, nonformal and informal learning.

Dominicé (2000) reported on the focus of life history and the biographical approach from the European Society for Research in the Education of Adults as based on reports from conferences in Geneva, Vienna, and Rome. Dominicé’s research with educational biography led him to the overall conclusion that there should be “profound respect for each person’s distinctive life history,” ( p. xix) “the examination of previous learning experiences can empower people to assume greater responsibility for future learning experiences,” and “life events, life contexts, personal, and socio-cultural experiences contribute to the complexity of a person’s life,” and therefore, “the person’s learning” (p. xix).

The literature supports the theory that “education is related to life events, experiences, and changes, and these give perspective to an educational biography” (Dominicé, 2000, p. 3). As Dominicé reported, educational biography offers “basic data for thinking about education as a much broader phenomenon than formal learning alone” (p. 3). Because “most adult learning occurs outside formal education” (p. 4), it is necessary to explore the life culture, society, and circumstances of the individual to understand the process of learning. Regarding the importance of life history narratives, Candy (as cited in Dominicé) wrote that:

Life history narratives can reveal the ways in which living systems form a web of life. They can make it increasingly clear that the personal and societal aspects of life are connected. In addition, different adults have quite different modes of learning, and the modes are influenced by the ways individuals organize their lives. We each bring forth our world by living, because to live is to know, and what we know serves as a lens through which we interpret new experiences. (as cited in Dominicé, p.4)

We help construct our own reality. Thus, each biography has its own truth” (p. 6) and educational biographies can help adult learners recognize social and interpersonal influences on their lives and educational activities. For adult educators and students, reading a prepared life history focused on learning can also clarify the interdependence of biographical themes, major life transitions, and educational activities, calling learners’ attention to both processes and outcomes in their lives and learning. A focus on specific occupational activities can result in a similar clarification (Schön, 1987). The narratives can also reveal formerly hidden influences, such as cultural traditions and beliefs (Dominicé, 2000, p. 6).

Jarvis (cited in Domincé, 2000, p. 6) stated that the “...literature is giving increasing attention to the societal context that influences adult learning” that is to an adults’ current social, economic, and political environments and not just to his or her past; these societal influences are powerful. They are seen to set structural limits and offer opportunities that also contribute to an adults’ unique subjective experience (p. 6).

As the AARP report suggested and as surmised by Dominicé (2000), local changes in a person's life "trigger" an increased interest in learning (p. 6). Studies by Jackson and Caffarella (1994) infer that "experiential learning and situational cognition" lead to "authentic learning activities" and are likely to produce "transfer of knowledge" thus educational biography may reveal the situations that lead to the optimum learning environment for adults. Dominicé reported:

Taking the societal aspects of a life into account adds to the complexity, paradoxes, and contradictions, found in any educational biography; nevertheless, it is important to consider the societal aspects of change in family, work, and community, along with the personal aspects of life. (p. 7)

The literature implies that it is important for adult learners to understand their own learning process, and it is beneficial to analyze another person's educational biography and thus, have insight and perspective when writing an educational self narrative. Dominicé (2000) presents the notion that his type of peer exchange of information offers adult learners an "affirmation of the uniqueness and diversity of others' educational journeys and an appreciation of the similar themes that emerge" (p. 10) and "... educators also benefit from the resulting insights about adult's subjective view of their learning activities" (p. 10).

As Dominicé (2000) claims, "Educational biography is part of the growing volume of qualitative research in the social sciences" (p. 11). Since World War II, other disciplines (psychology, sociology, and history) have developed the practice of conducting life history and oral interviews for varied types of research. With an increasingly aging population, there is a new focus on the life cycle. Young and older adults are reconsidering the "specific biographical dimension of work life" (Alheit, 1995) and the "mental demands" (Kegan, 1996) that exist in contemporary life work situations. Scholars agreed that the dialogue that results from the study of educational biographies can "enrich our knowledge of ways to help adults guide their lives,

including ways to empower them to guide their learning” (as cited in Dominicé, p. 12).

Therefore, as the literature recommends, educational biography is a useful tool for researchers, educators, and adult learners.

The interpretation of content subject is dependent on the interactive dynamics between the “building” of the biography and the final interpretation (Dominicé, 2000, p. 24). Further, according to Dominicé (2000), it is evident that qualitative research using rich, thick description gives credence to the researcher’s study offering an appropriate method for studying educational biographies:

The researcher is particularly at risk of falling into the trap of looking at the narratives as empirical data and following a methodology influenced by the traditional models of social science. At a stage of scientific research when hermeneutics is more and more recognized as a methodology for interpreting qualitative data in the form of recorded and transcribed interviews, it is important to underline once again the specificity of the texts produced by the methodology of educational biography. (p. 25)

Dominicé’s (2000) research led to the conclusion that “The educational biography . . . viewed through the individual’s formal and informal education, becomes a source of information that leads the individual and other participants to an understanding of the stages of learning through which his or her personal knowledge is acquired” (p. 35).

### Summary

The literature review indicates that 1) globalization has led to a rapidly changing society within the postmodern age of information; 2) that lifelong learning will be required for people to remain current with occupations in the postmodern era; 3) that an aging population (with people living longer) has extended the need for lifespan learning; and, 4) that adults have enhanced cognitive and emotional function through learning. Hence, it may be deduced that the study of the life history of an educator who lived happily and well as a lifelong learner may provide

insight for others who desire to become learners for a lifetime and for adult educators as they study the phenomenon of lifelong learning.

Furthermore, the research supported the educational biography for the purpose of reading and interpreting data in order to learn from the lifetime experience of a lifelong learner. Thus, the literature provided a rationale for the study of lifelong learning incorporating an educational biography of Elizabeth Pendleton, as an example of an individual who was a lifelong learner.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

As stated to in Chapter 1, the intent of this study was to examine the life of Elizabeth Armetta Gammon Pendleton and identify the attributes – characteristics, personality traits, beliefs, and attitudes—that contributed to her inclination toward lifelong learning. The purpose was to explore the phenomenon of lifelong learning while celebrating the unique life of Elizabeth Pendleton; therefore, a qualitative study provided the most effective methodology. From an interpretive research perspective, learning is considered to be a process; therefore, by understanding the meaning of the learning process or experience of learning in the life of Elizabeth Pendleton, the researcher gained knowledge through an inductive mode of inquiry. This study employed a detailed biographical narrative description of her life and interviews with people who knew her to contribute to existing theory grounded in oral and traditional history under the framework of lifelong learning. Using a qualitative method expanded the value of this study for the purpose of naturalistic and user (reader) generalizations that reveal the challenges that face a growing population of aging adults and enhance the understanding of lifelong learning.

#### Focus of the Study

I developed a biographical examination of Elizabeth Pendleton from information on Elizabeth Pendleton that I gathered from personal access to family records (audiotaped interviews, videotaped interviews, family photos, family letters, and other family artifacts and documents) gained by permission from the executor of her estate and from a series of interviews with former education colleagues, former students, peers, church members, community

members, and relatives of Elizabeth Pendleton. The result was a focus of study that explored the phenomenon of lifelong learning, while celebrating the unique life of Elizabeth Pendleton.

### Fit of the Study - Qualitative Research - Biography

Kridel (1998) suggested that there is a universality and value of the biography as a literary form as was quoted by the great classic writers Emerson and Yeats. Emerson stated, ‘There is properly no history: only biography,’ and Yeats said, ‘Nothing exists but a stream of souls, that all knowledge is biography’ (p. 7). In *Biography as High Adventure* (1986) and *Biography As History* (1991), Oates described a comprehensive framework for biographical research with three approaches: the scholarly chronicle (reflects the biographer’s quest for objectivity and consists primarily of a recitation of facts), the critical study (an author’s analysis or intellectual biography with appropriate detachment and skepticism) of subject, and the narrative biography (seeks to combine the scholarly and critical approach) (as cited in Keidel, pp. 8-10). This study employed a combination of these approaches to educational biography. Fortunately, educators in our postmodern age “clearly recognize the importance of personal narrative, the power of stories, and the significance of whose perspective is being expressed and whose is being heard” and they recognize the “emergence of multifaceted research methodologies embodying interpretive, naturalistic inquiry” (p. 10).

Rossmann and Rallis (1998, cited in Creswell, 2003, p. 181) recommended capturing both the “traditional perspectives and the newer advocacy, participatory, and self-reflective perspectives of qualitative inquiry.” Therefore, this study employed the following three perspectives: research that took place in the natural setting; multiple methods that were interactive and humanistic (with sensitivity for participants and open-ended interviews, using an array of materials such as photographs, certificates, audio and visual relics, and various other



heirlooms and artifacts) and an emergent rather than prefigured study (with the awareness that questions changed as the study was refined) (Creswell, 2003, pp. 182-183). This biographical study of the life of Elizabeth Gammon Pendleton applied an interpretive means of analyzing the data for themes or categories filtering through the data with a personal lens, while at the same time, viewing the phenomena holistically (broad rather than micro) with systematic reflection and sensitivity toward the participants, the subject, and the researcher's self interest ( p. 182).

As presented by Franklin (2007) at East Tennessee State University and emailed as personal communication, the basic steps for the process for writing an interpretive biography are:

- Step 1: author begin with an objective set of experiences in the subject's life  
(stages and experiences)
- Step 2: author gathers concrete contextual biographical materials – focus on stories
- Step 3: stories are organized around themes that indicate pivotal events or epiphanies
- Step 4: researcher explores meaning of stories
- Step 5: researcher searches for larger structure to explain meanings and provides  
interpretation (Franklin, personal communication, May 2007)

Finally, the researcher used “complex reasoning that was multi-faceted, iterative, and simultaneous . . . cycling back and forth from data collection, analysis, and writing up data” (Creswell, 2003, p. 183) in order to glean insights into the process of lifelong learning in the life of Elizabeth Pendleton.

### Participants

As the primary investigator, I used a purposeful sampling technique to select participants for the study based on the following criteria:

1. People who had a personal relationship with Elizabeth Pendleton.
2. People with knowledge concerning the educational experience (as a student or professional), and the life of Elizabeth Pendleton, such as family members, co-workers, peers, former students, friends, and church and community members.
3. Heterogeneous purposeful sample is to include diversity based on gender and age (when appropriate).

I identified family members, co-workers, former students, peers, friends, church members and community members who had a relationship with Elizabeth Pendleton. Once these people were identified, I purposefully selected the participants for the interview. I placed telephone calls, sent letters, and email messages requesting their participation in the study. This communication with the participants included a detailed explanation of the specifics of the study. My research goal was to identify and interview between 15 and 25 individuals who had a relationship with Elizabeth Pendleton. I interviewed 26 individuals and had personal correspondence or conversations with seven additional individuals. I gathered family archival documents, artifacts, and records (audiotaped interviews, videotaped interviews, family photos, family papers, and other related items) as a resource for the biographical information in this dissertation. Then, I interviewed the selected participants for the purpose of identifying the traits and characteristics that contributed to Elizabeth Pendleton's outward appearance as a lifelong learner. Fortunately, there were enough family archival records available for me to complete the biographical information based on the audio and visual interviews recorded with Elizabeth Pendleton and the interviews, correspondence, and conversations with the 33 participants.

I received support and permission from the executor of her estate, her only daughter (my mother) who lives in Florida, and from other family members to use the family records and other family information. My grandmother was aware of my goal to write this educational biography and she was very supportive of my efforts.

In Chapter 1, I explained the possibility of bias and limitations that a familiar relationship creates, along with the recognizable benefits of first-hand knowledge of a subject in qualitative research. As cited in *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data* (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) studies by Cole and Knowles (2001), Tierney (1999), Frisch (1990), Grele, (1985) Lummis

(1988), and McMahan (1989) indicate “Life histories of ordinary people enable researchers to learn about the way people live, often focusing on documenting a way of life that is disappearing” (as cited in Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 8). Elizabeth Pendleton died in 2005; therefore, it was important to document her life before the memories of her family, friends, co-workers, and students began to fade with the passage of time.

### Successive Phases of the Study

The first phase included data collection, with recorded interview sessions scheduled over a period of 3 to 4 weeks with some preliminary classifying and analyzing of data, as suggested by Dominicé (1990) and note-taking. The second phase was the collection of documents and artifacts and audio visual records. These data were counted, sorted, documented, and coded. While the document and artifact data collection was being completed, the interview recordings were transcribed, and then coded. The fourth phase was the analysis of the data. An external auditor reviewed the information that was chosen for the study’s record. Then finally, the fifth phase of the study consisted of working on data and notes review, compilation, organization, and composition of the narrative educational biography and analysis of the data.

### Data Collection Overview

The data collection was organized into three main sets of data that included data gained through personal interviews and correspondence, data from documents and family records, and data from audio and visual records including photographs and audio and videotaped recordings. As I collected the data, I used the basic strategy of constant comparison to study the notes from the interviews, field notes, documents and artifacts, and audio visual recordings. These comparisons led to “tentative” categories that were compared to each other so that “levels of

conceptualization” were established (Dominicé, 1990, p. 159). The following sections provide a discussion of the collection methods for each of the data collection segments.

### Interview Data Collection

The interview data were collected through face-to-face, synchronous personal interviews or through telephone or email if face-to-face interviews were not possible. When possible, the interviews were held in the homes of the participants. If it was not possible to meet in the homes of the participant, we met at my house or at another designated location that was acceptable to the participants. The interviews lasted approximately 1 hour each and contained various types of questions such as: grand tour, mini tour, experience, and native language questions. Further, the interviews consisted of descriptive questions, structural questions, hypothetical questions, and a devil’s advocate questions. A list of questions appears in Appendix A. The interviews were both structured and unstructured and included a few main questions to start the conversations. The interviews were audiotaped and professionally transcribed and organized for analysis.

### Document and Artifact Data Collection

Data were collected from documents and artifacts gathered when the family sold the home where Elizabeth Pendleton resided during the last 20 years of her life and from other family archives. The personal items include documents (letters, cards, books, papers, certificates, awards, articles of clothing, jewelry, eyeglasses, and other personal items) that were stored for the purpose of saving family archival items and for this study. As previously stated, before she passed away, Elizabeth Pendleton was eager and excited to be a part of this study on lifelong learning; therefore, the family and the executor of her estate, her daughter, Shirley, fully cooperated with the gathering of family documents. Some of these personal item documents and artifacts appear as figures in Chapters 5 – 12 and also in the Appendix.

### Audio and Visual Records Data Collection

There was an available collection of audio and visual artifacts because Elizabeth Pendleton was an avid collector of family artifacts (photographs, poems, schoolwork, and artwork). She was also interested in “teaching through telling” so she actively participated in recorded interviews and video filming concerning her life and the times that she lived. An example of her attitude toward education was confirmed through visits to the classrooms of her grandchildren spanning four decades. She took pride in visiting the schools her descendants attended and enjoyed meeting the teachers and participating in grandparents’ days, educational projects, and other historical activities.

Nine months before her death, the family celebrated Elizabeth Pendleton’s 95<sup>th</sup> birthday (September 2004) and her relatives accumulated recorded audio tapes, video tapes, and hundreds of photographs for a Power Point presentation presented at her birthday celebration. Some of these artifacts, photographs, and data appear as figures in Chapters 5 – 12 and also in the Appendix.

### Data Analysis Overview

As defined by Merriam (1998), data analysis is “the process of making sense out of the data” and it involves “consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read—it is the process of making meaning” (p. 178). The data from this study were “compressed and linked in a narrative that conveys the meaning” (p. 179).

As presented by Franklin (2007) at East Tennessee State University and sent as an email, an overview of the steps of analysis are:

Step 1: Chronology – identify an objective set of experiences in the individual’s life  
looking for life-course stages

Step 2: Patterns – search for the patterns and themes of the individual’s life by examining the chronology

Step 3: Reconstruct – the researcher reconstructs the life of the individual based on those patterns and epiphanies. (Franklin, personal communication, May 2007)

To assist with this analysis, I employed Constant Comparison Analysis (CCA) as a method of analysis. The CCA was designed by Glaser and Straus (1967) to assist in the process of developing grounded theory. As reported by Merriam (1998) in *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*:

A grounded theory consists of categories, properties, and hypotheses that are the conceptual links between and among the categories and properties. Because the basic strategy of the constant comparative method is compatible with the inductive concept-building orientation of all qualitative research, the constant comparative method has been adopted by any researchers who are not seeking to build substantive theory. (p. 159)

As recommended by Merriam (1998), the analysis included a continuous comparison of incidents, and respondents’ remarks with units of data sorted into groups that have a common denominator or relationship. This may be as small as one descriptive word in a phrase (p. 179). Of course, the unit of data must be heuristic- “that is the unit should reveal information relevant to the study and stimulate the reader to think beyond the particular bit of information” (p. 179). The previously mentioned data were collected and analyzed following an organized process to discover the patterns of lifelong learning in Elizabeth Pendleton’s life that provided valuable insights. With this process of analysis repeated, categories emerged that logically identified the characteristics, personality traits, beliefs, and attitudes that contributed to her inclination toward lifelong learning for the purpose of providing insights into the phenomenon of lifelong learning.

### Interview Data Analysis

The interview data were professionally transcribed and then analyzed. The analysis was based on the CCA method of analysis. The process included consideration that the final outcome of these method was to identify “patterns,” There are five key guidelines listed by Merriam (1998) as important for “determining the efficacy of categories derived from the constant comparative method of analysis” (p. 183). The analysis of the interview mirrors Merriam’s guidelines: a) reflect the purpose of the research; b) be exhaustive – be able to place all data into a category; c) be mutually exclusive – the data should fit into only one category; d) the categories should be sensitizing – an outsider should be able to read and understand data; and finally, e) the categories should be conceptually congruent – same level of abstraction—same level of abstraction or characterization (p. 184). The interview transcripts, field notes, and observation notes were coded using CCA to assist with a systematic approach to the task.

### Documents and Artifacts Data Analysis

As described in the data collection paragraphs, the personal documents were unboxed, sorted, counted, and analyzed. Merriam (1998) stated that, “personal documents are a reliable source of data concerning a person’s attitudes, beliefs, and view of the world” (p. 116). However, Merriam includes the notice to the reader that the material chosen for inclusion was selected by the researcher and, therefore, may not be totally representative of the person being examined. As referenced by Merriam (1998) in *Qualitative Research and Case Study Application in Education*, Burgess (1982), Guba and Lincoln (1981), and Clark (1967) provided the guidelines for questions that should be asked concerning documents (as cited in Merriam, p. 116).

During the examination of the documents and artifacts, the types of questions suggested by the experts were used to determine the authenticity of the documents, for what the document was intended, and the extent of the circumstances surrounding the document.

The analysis of the documents and artifacts occurred in a large open room with four 4 x 8 foot tables placed in a square so that items can be documented, sorted and counted. Then the documents and artifacts were viewed or read closely and examined. The documents and items that were relevant to the study were analyzed, coded, photographed, scanned, or photocopied.

### Audio and Visual Records Analysis

Photographs and other audio and visual records are useful for examination, and as a means for remembering; however, there still remain questions to determine the authenticity of the audio visual recordings and other artifacts, for whom or for what purpose the artifacts were intended, and the extent of the circumstances surrounding the artifacts as described under documents. Also, as described in the section on interview data analysis and document and artifact analysis, I examined and analyzed the audio and visual records using the CCA method of analysis. Then the data were filtered by the personal lens of the researcher (Creswell, 2003) with an interpretation or conclusion about the meaning. With the unexpected death of Elizabeth Pendleton prior to the conducting of research interviews on lifelong learning, I was fortunate that there were audio and video tapes in the family archives from which the data were examined and analyzed.

### Instrument Review

The instrument review tested the interview script, my interviewing skills, and my data analysis technique. I used two individuals who had a close relationship with their own grandmother for the pilot study.



### Logistical Issues

The majority of the interviews were conducted at the homes of the participants, at my home, or they were conducted through a means that was agreeable to the participants. The appointments were scheduled at the convenience of the participants with follow-up sessions if necessary for clarification. As a family member of the subject, one of the benefits was close observation and understanding, with unlimited access to documents, artifacts, and records. The documents, artifacts, and some of the previously recorded interviews were stored in plastic crates and are in my possession. I gained access to additional photographs, audio, and videotaped recordings for access to further data. The relevant data were copied, photographed, or video-recorded for future reference. All of the physical documents, artifacts, and records referenced in the study were sorted, counted, coded, and classified while in my possession. The work on these items occurred at my home.

### Trustworthiness of the Data

Merriam (1998) argued that qualitative research is “dependent on the researcher’s presence, the nature of the interaction between the researcher and the participants, the triangulation of data, the interpretation of perceptions, and rich, thick description” (p. 152). Creswell (2003) confirmed the importance of checking the research strategies for the authenticity of the study. Creswell’s list of strategies include: triangulation, member-checking, use of rich, descriptive vocabulary to convey findings, clarification of the bias of the researcher, presentation of negative or discrepant information that runs counter to the theme, spending prolonged time in the field, peer-debriefing, and the use of an external auditor (2003). I insisted that the study maintain trustworthiness based on the recommendations of Merriam and Creswell including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as recommended by Lincoln and

Guba (1985) to establish the trustworthiness of the data in the findings of this study.

Additionally, the study relied on a holistic understanding of the information with plausible explanations concerning the phenomena (Mathison, 1988).

The primary source of data was derived from the subject, Elizabeth Pendleton, through the review and transcription of audio and videotaped recordings and from interviews using her exact words and the exact words of participants who were family members, friends, colleagues, students, and caregivers of Elizabeth Pendleton. The secondary source data was collected from letters, books, awards and certificates, photographs, official and unofficial documents, and family artifacts related to Elizabeth Pendleton's experiences, her formal, informal, and nonformal education, and her encounters as a lifelong learner. Triangulation of these diverse sources confirmed the data as accurate and credible.

As the granddaughter of Elizabeth Pendleton and primary caregiver for the last decade of her life, I had a prolonged time to "develop an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study and can convey detail about the site and the people" thus lending credibility to the narrative account (Creswell, 2003, p. 196). Because qualitative research focuses on process, meaning, and understanding (Merriam, 1998), this study focuses on providing rich, thick descriptions and reliance on the subject and participants' words to convey meaning and significance to the study. Moreover, the inclusion of photographs, documents, and family artifacts may advance the theory of lifelong learning, which may enhance the transferability of the study.

Following the concept of trustworthiness outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985), an external check was used for trustworthiness. Rachel De Luise, a doctoral candidate at Florida State University, served as a peer debriefer and Judith Nyabando, a doctoral candidate in

Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis (ELPA) at East Tennessee State University (ETSU) with IRB certification, served as transcriber. As a relative of Elizabeth Pendleton with research experience and IRB certification, De Luise was a logical choice as a debriefer. Additionally, the biographical information was reviewed by several of Elizabeth Pendleton's descendants for credibility and reliability. Thus, the validation of the findings occurred throughout the process of research and analysis.

### Ethical Considerations

Merriam (1998) stated that "First and foremost, the researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values, and desires of the informant(s)" (p. 201). In this study the participants were reflecting on the life and experiences of Elizabeth Pendleton. I explained these rights to the participants and assumed the obligation to respect and celebrate the life of Elizabeth Pendleton throughout the process of research and analysis and in the narrative.

Other safeguards were employed to protect the rights of Elizabeth Pendleton and the other participants as recommended by Merriam. These safeguards included:

- 1) the research objectives were articulated verbally and in writing so that they were clearly understood by the informant;
- 2) permission to proceed with the study as articulated was received [in this study, Shirley Carlson, executor of Elizabeth Pendleton's estate gave permission for the study];
- 3) a research exemption form was filed and approved by the Institutional Review Board;
- 4) the informant[s] were informed of all data collection devices and activities;
- 5) verbatim transcriptions and written interpretations and reports were made available to the informant[s];
- 6) the informant's rights, interests, and wishes were considered first when choices were made regarding reporting the data; and,
- 7) the final decision regarding informant anonymity rested with the informants. (1998, p. 202)

Therefore, I was aware of the ethical issues and strove to address ethical considerations throughout the process, collection, analysis, and writing of this study.

### Summary

After the collection and analysis of the three sets of data (interviews, documents and artifacts, and audio and visual records) as previously described, I adopted an overall system for coding and cataloging (Merriam, 1998, p. 123) content analysis as a “systematic procedure for describing” using a type of sequential process (Merriam, p. 123). As stated by Merriam referring to the work of Altheide, most researchers embrace “moving from category construction to sampling, data collection, data analysis and interpretation” with the aim to be “systematic and analytic, but not rigid” (cited in Merriam 1998, p. 123). I used a step-by-step process method of analysis to discover patterns in the life of Elizabeth Pendleton. I collected and analyzed the data using these methods to explain the phenomenon of lifelong learning through the examination of the life of Elizabeth Pendleton.

## CHAPTER 4

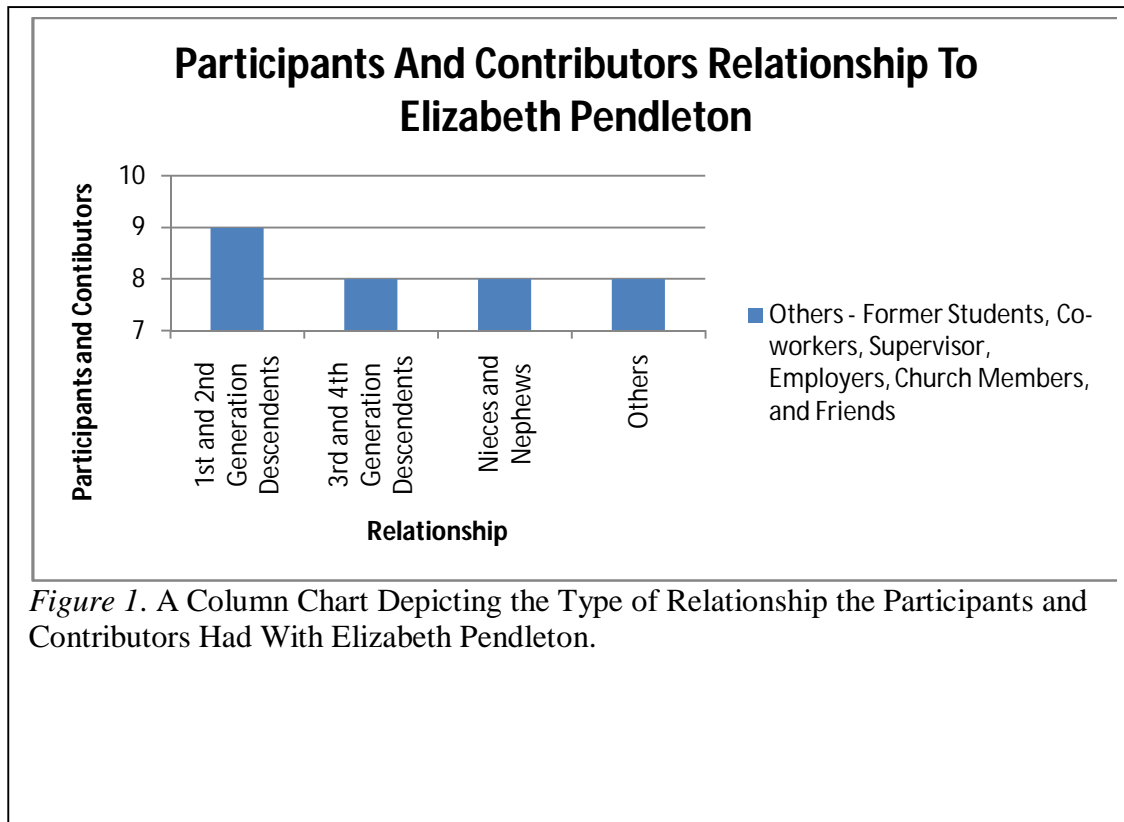
### PRESENTATION OF DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of this study was to explore the phenomenon of lifelong learning using an inductive mode of inquiry in an examination of the life of Elizabeth Armetta Gammon Pendleton. The qualitative study was presented from an interpretive research perspective. This research employed the format of a detailed biographical narrative description of Elizabeth's life, family artifacts, photographs, papers, documents, and interviews, correspondence, and personal conversations with individuals who knew her to confirm and enhance existing theory grounded in oral and traditional history under the framework of lifelong learning.

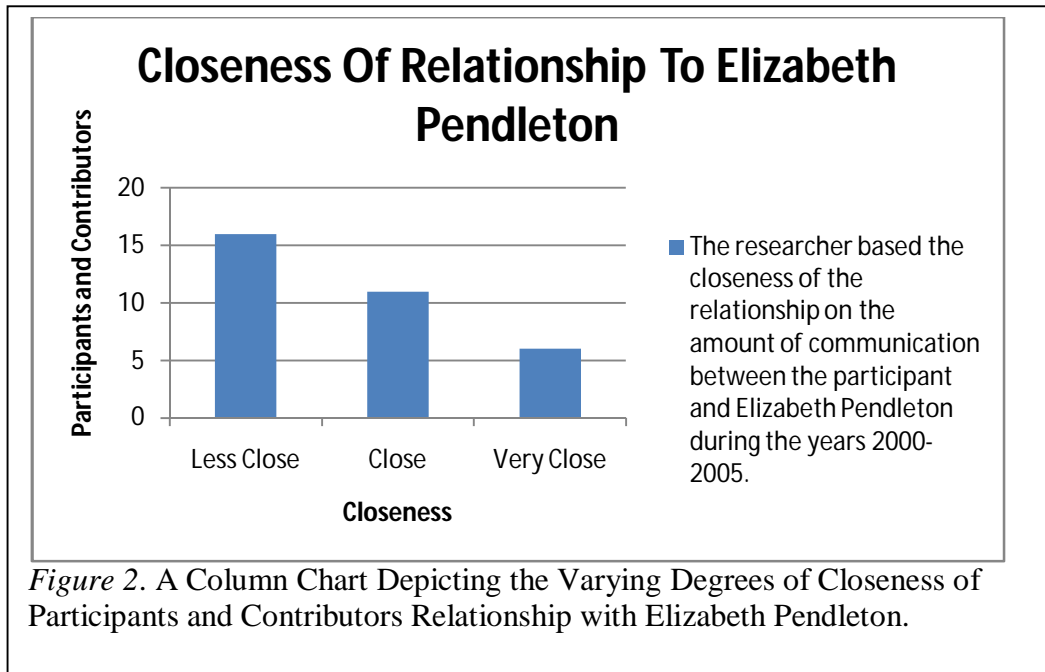
I presented the biographical narrative in Elizabeth's own words transcribed from family archival audio and videotaped interviews with her during the last 5 years of her life. Additional biographical data were supplied from the artifacts, photographs, papers, documents, and interviews, correspondence, and conversations with 33 individuals who had a close relationship with Elizabeth and their words were incorporated into the biography and subsequent summary. The participants' interviews were analyzed under the framework of lifelong learning in the life of Elizabeth Pendleton. The data were collected, sorted, and coded between June 8, 2007 and August 8, 2007. The interviews were conducted between August 8, 2007 and February 8, 2008. The analysis occurred between December 28, 2007, and February 10, 2008.

The interview participants were purposefully selected to provide a comprehensive description of Elizabeth in order to gain insight into her life as a person with an inclination toward lifelong learning. In addition to the interviewed participants, Figures 2 through 6 reflect individual contributors who provided comments through personal correspondence or personal communication. These individuals are referred to as "contributors." The participants and other

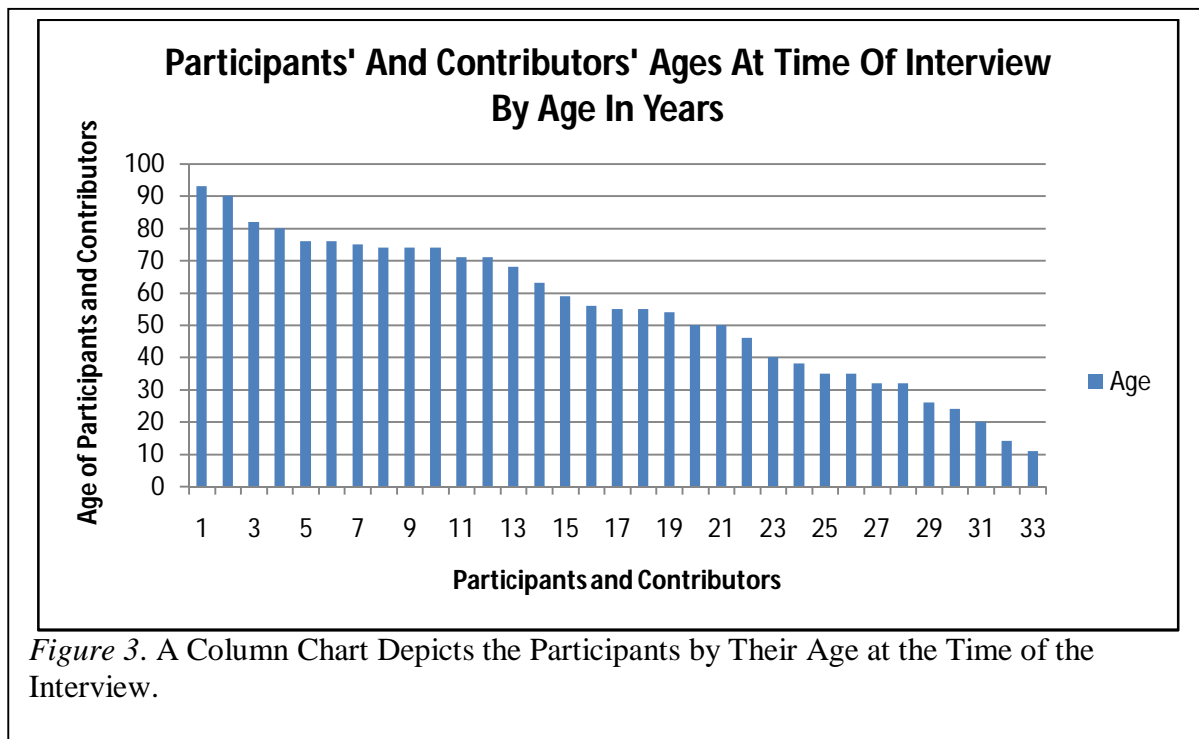
contributors all had a relationship with Elizabeth as presented in Figure 1. The following figures are intended to be helpful as a visual aid depicting the individuals (interviewed participants and contributors) and are not intended for analysis.



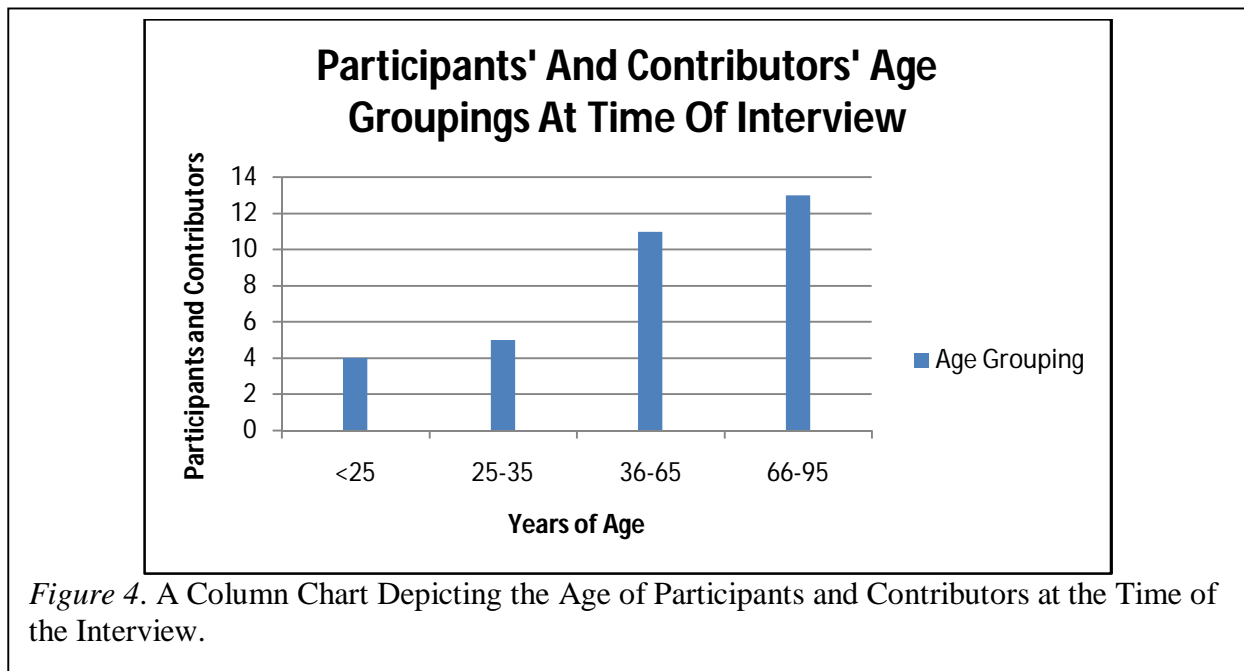
The participants and contributors were selected to represent varying degrees of closeness of relationship with Elizabeth Pendleton as presented in Figure 2.



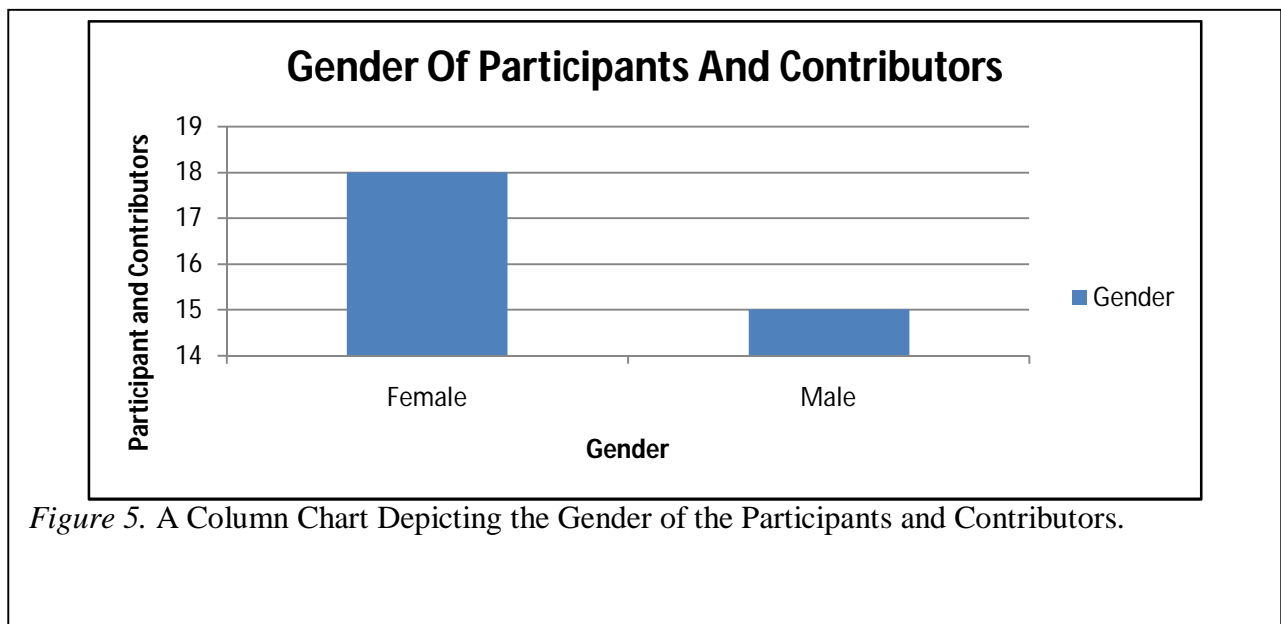
The participants and contributors were selected to provide a wide range of ages as presented in Figure 3.



The participants and contributors were selected to have representatives from various age groups as presented in Figure 4.



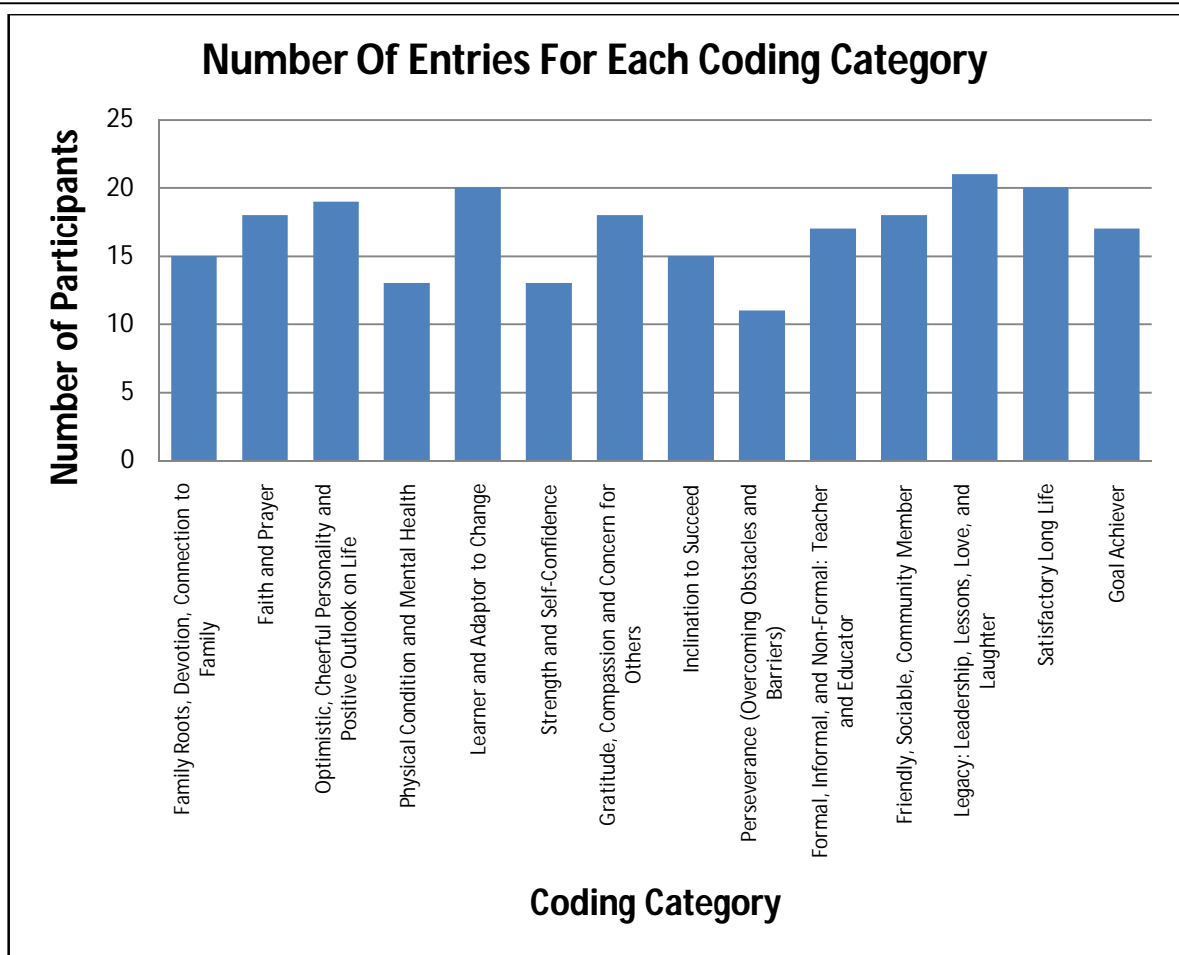
The participants and contributors were selected to have representatives from both genders as presented in Figure 5.





The data and subsequent analysis provides a unique glimpse of a lifelong learner in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The data were in the form of transcribed audio and videotapes, family photographs, personal and family artifacts and interviews, personal correspondence, or conversations with 33 individuals who had various types of relationships with Elizabeth. The research on Elizabeth's life provided a wealth of data for analysis. There were 125 pages of personal interview transcripts with Elizabeth and 321 pages of interview transcripts with 26 interviewed participants and personal correspondence and personal communication with the 7 individual contributors for a total of 33 individuals.

The data from 26 interviewed participants was coded and 14 themes were identified as descriptions or observations for the inclination toward lifelong learning in the life of Elizabeth Pendleton. The coded categories and number of participants are presented in Figure 6.



*Figure 6.* The Coded Categories and Number of Participants Are Depicted In a Column Chart.

The coded responses from the 26 interviewed participants are presented in Figure 7.

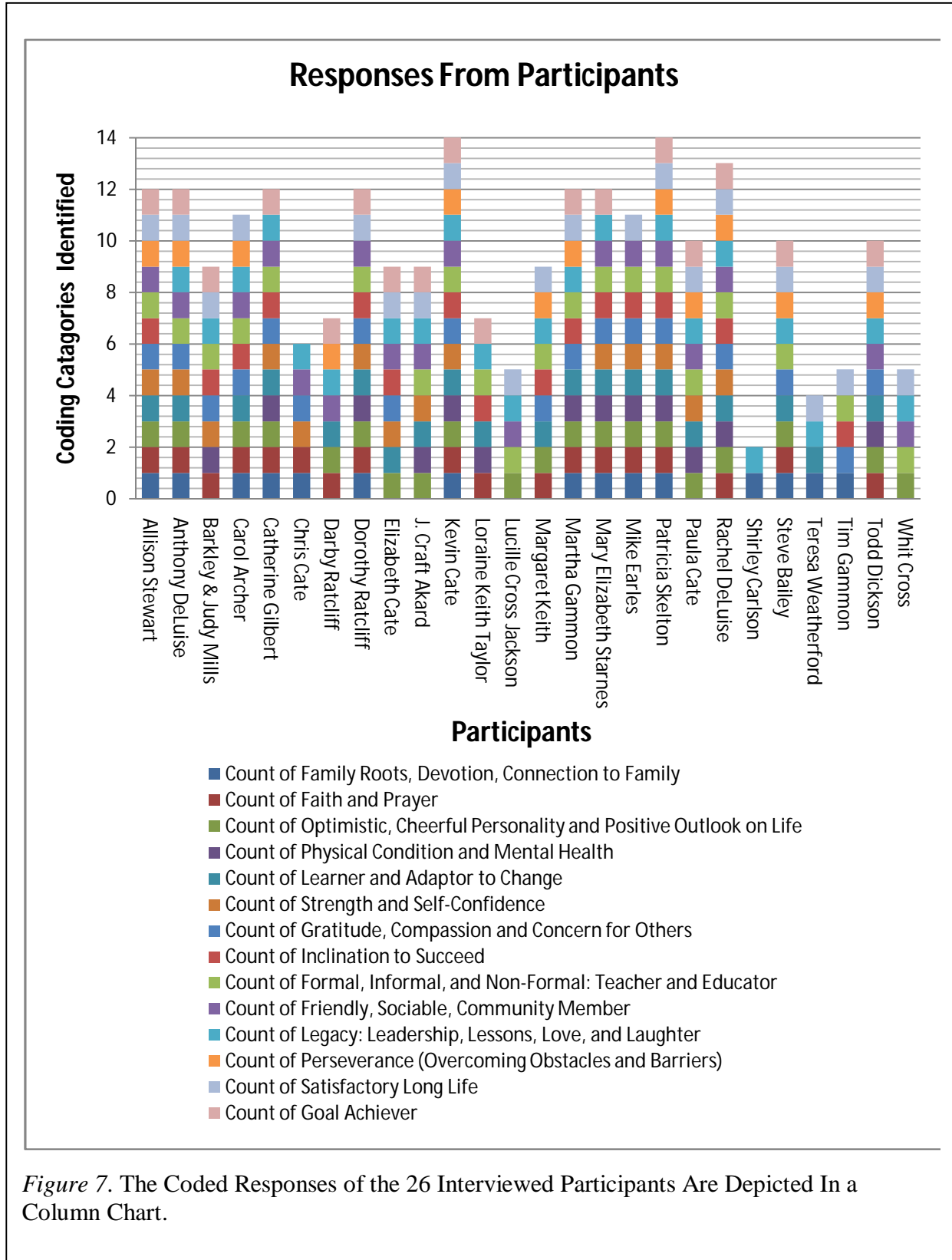
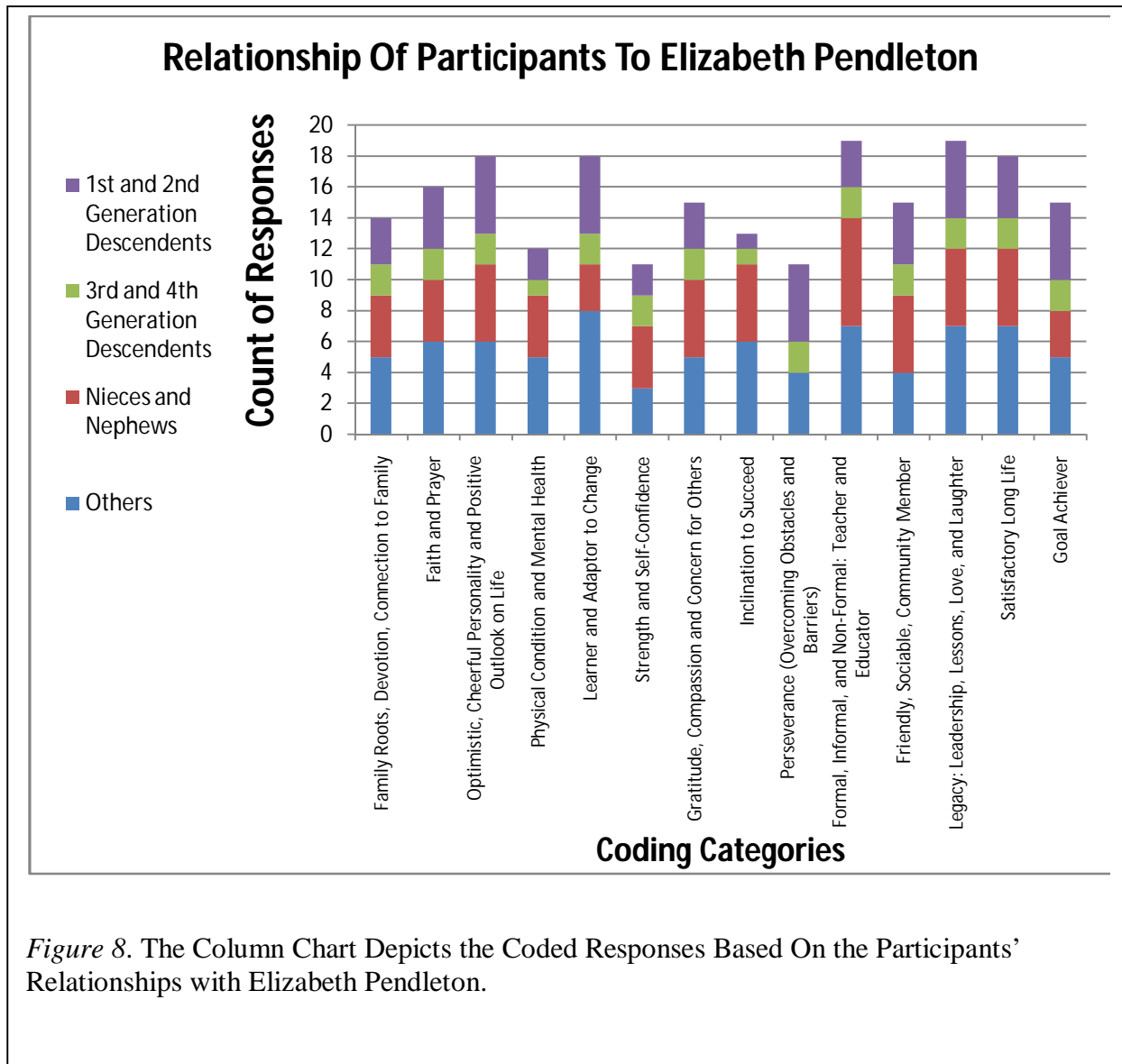
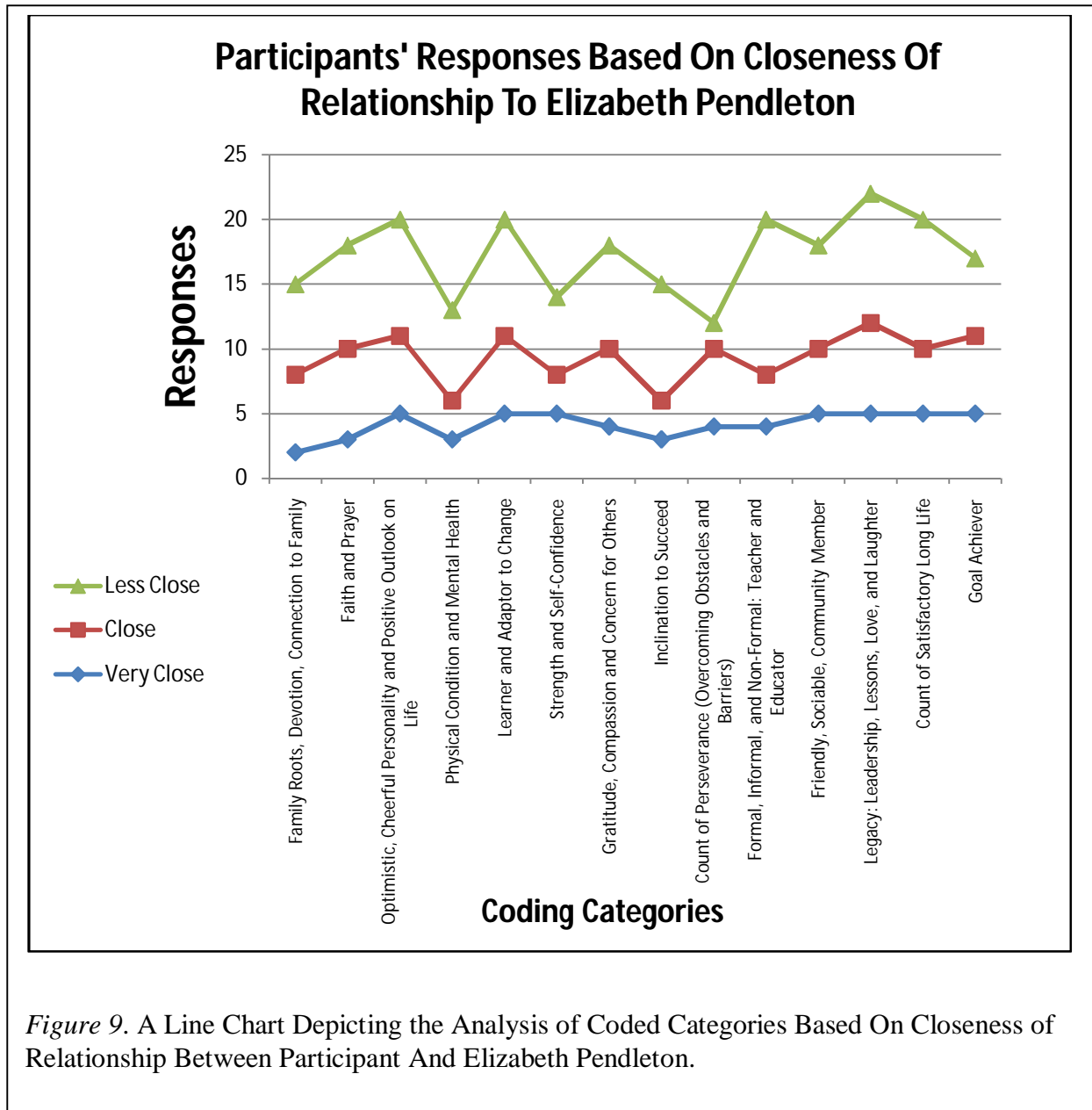


Figure 7. The Coded Responses of the 26 Interviewed Participants Are Depicted In a Column Chart.

The coded responses from the 26 participants are presented in Figure 8 based on relationship status with Elizabeth Pendleton.



The coded responses that were analyzed by the closeness of the participants' relationships to Elizabeth Pendleton are presented in Figure 9.



The coded responses analyzed by age groups are presented in Figure 10.

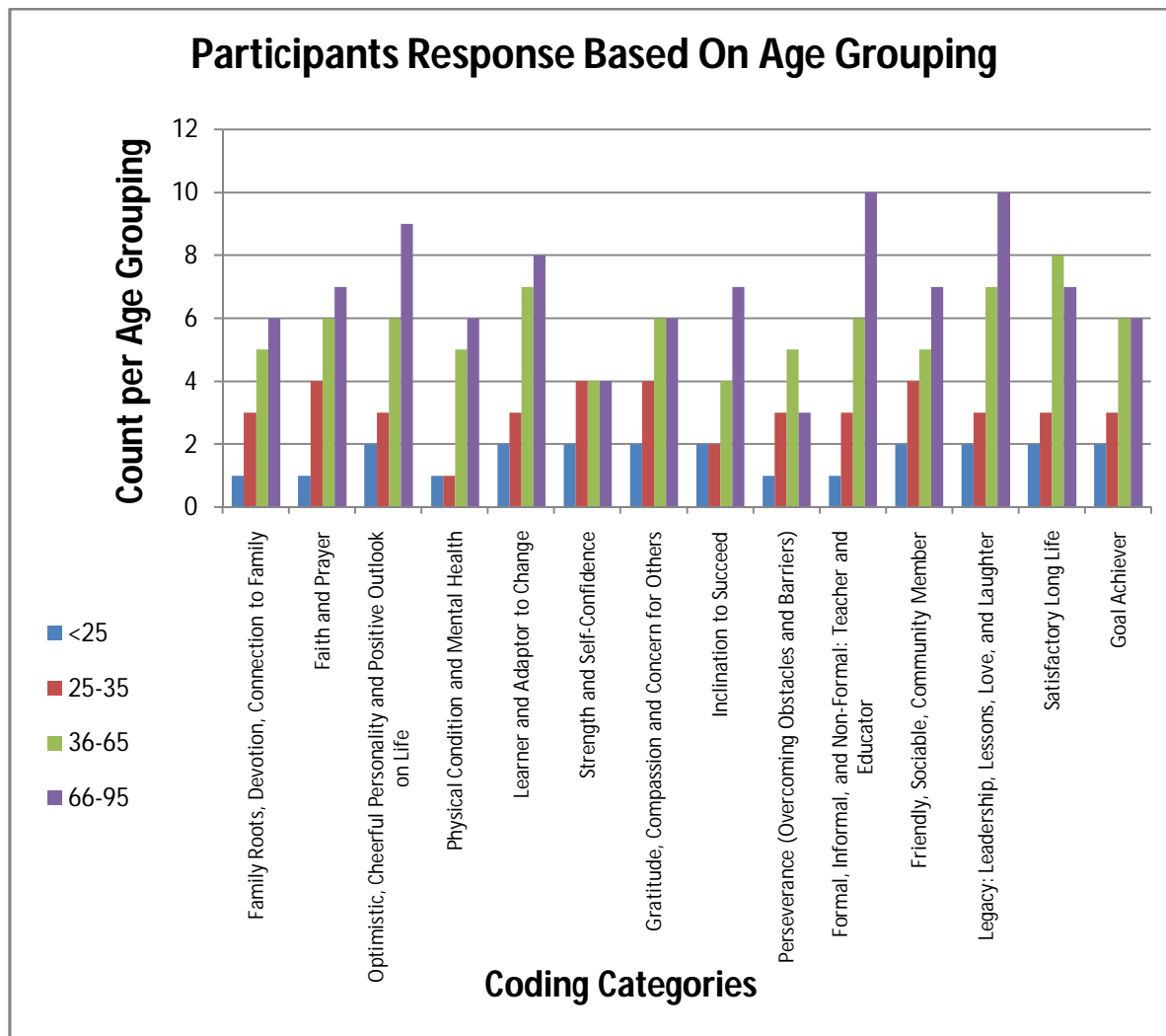


Figure 10. This Column Chart Depicts the Participants Responses Based On Age Groupings.

With the understanding that there is not a universal definition for a lifelong learner, this study on the inclination toward lifelong learning in the life of Elizabeth Pendleton is based on a core definition that lifelong learning is all learning activity undertaken throughout life, whether formal or informal (Harvey, 2004). The data were presented and subsequently analyzed and summarized through an integrated approach acknowledging the intersections among the

biological, psychological, and sociocultural perspectives of learning (Merriam & Cafferella, 1999) through the format of educational biography.

### Introduction to Elizabeth Armetta Gammon Pendleton

The subject of this study, Elizabeth Pendleton (September 25, 1909 – June 23, 2005), lived nearly a century in the rural Appalachian Mountains of northeast Tennessee. She was a remarkable lady who set an excellent example as a visionary leader, teacher, administrative supervisor, community servant, dedicated church member, friend, wife, mother, and grandmother for the four generations of her descendants who knew and adored her. She was a storyteller, a jokester, an eloquent speaker, an athlete, a country cook, a worthy matron, a traveler, and the list continues. Elizabeth lived a vibrant, optimistic, and rewarding life --- she loved her family and her church, she enjoyed her friends, and she loved people for 95 years. What unique traits, characteristics, beliefs, and attitudes did Elizabeth Pendleton have that allowed her to celebrate life everyday for 95 years? What kept her excited about life and learning? How did she inspire so many with her optimistic attitude? What difficulties did she overcome during her lifetime? A response will be presented as a narrative biography in a chronological order with responses from participants embedded and emergent themes noted in a subsequent analysis.

Figure 11 provides an overview of the timeline of Elizabeth Pendleton's life journey in relationship to historical events that occurred during the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

<b>American Historical Event Timeline</b>	<b>Elizabeth Pendleton's Life Event Timeline</b>
1900 World Population 1.6 billion 1900 Women compete in Olympics 1903 Wright brothers fly first plane 1905 Einstein announces theory of relativity	<b>1900</b>  1909 Elizabeth Gammon born in Sullivan Co.TN
1913 Model T touring car first produced 1914 WWI Begins 1918 Global "Spanish Flu" epidemic	<b>1910</b>  1916 Sunrise Elementary School
1920 US women win right to vote 1925 First television transmission 1929 The Great Depression	<b>1920</b>  1926 Death of Elizabeth's mother 1928 Holston High School Graduation
1933 New Deal initiates economic recovery 1939 Hitler invades Poland – WWII Begins	<b>1930</b>  1930 Hiwassee Graduation 1930 Marriage to Paris Pendleton 1932 Birth of Child Shirley Faye
1945 Atomic bombs are dropped 1946 First meeting of the UN General Assembly 1947 Gandhi's civil disobedience movement	<b>1940</b>  1940s School Teacher Miller-Perry Active in Church & Community
1950 First credit card issued in US 1954 Brown v Board of Education 1958 First Color TV broadcast	<b>1950</b>  1953 Elizabeth becomes first-time Grandmother 1955 Graduation BS Degree from ETSU 1957 Birth of Grandson
1960 First televised US presidential debate 1964 Civil Rights Act adopted in US 1965 US enters Vietnam War 1969 Apollo 11 Moon landing	<b>1960</b>  1961 Death of Elizabeth's Father Promotion to Supervisor Sullivan Co. Schools
1973 US withdraws from Vietnam 1973 Energy Crisis 1973 First Cell Phone	<b>1970</b>  1973 Birth of first Great-Granddaughter 1976 Retirement from Sullivan County Schools
1981 First Space Shuttle Launch 1982 Equal Rights Amendment bill defeated 1983 First Personal Computer 1989 Fall of Communism	<b>1980</b>  1980 Celebrate 50 <sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary 1983 Death of Paris Pendleton (husband) 1984 Began to travel Europe, Caribbean
1991 Breakup of Soviet Union 1991 The World-Wide-Web was introduced 1999 Estimated world population 6.2 billion	<b>1990</b>  1990 Continue Travel Tours and visit family 1993 Birth of first Great Great Granddaughter 1990s Extended time and visits with family
2001 September 11th 2002 War on Terrorism - Iraq	<b>2000</b>  2005 Death of Elizabeth Pendleton

Figure 11. Time Line of Elizabeth Pendleton's Life.



## CHAPTER 5

### BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION

Elizabeth Armetta Gammon Pendleton (1909- 2005) lived through a century of changing circumstances and situations that required strength, astuteness, resourcefulness, and faith. She lost her mother at an early age, yet learned to run a household and take care of a younger sibling before venturing off to college at a time when Appalachian women were not typically college bound. She traveled away from her rural Appalachian farm homeplace in Sullivan County, Tennessee, seeking education, so when her father lost his savings in the Great Depression, she borrowed money to continue in school and graduate from college. In the midst of hard times, she taught school during war, and excelled as a teacher and supervisor, while nurturing her soul through church and community affairs. As a family matriarch, she inspired four generations of her descendants to see her as a model of adaptability, grace, faith, and optimism.

Elizabeth had a fair, baby soft complexion and light, curly white-blond hair, with twinkling brown eyes. She had excellent posture and remained in good physical condition (possibly from her high school and college basketball days) until the last few months of her life. Elizabeth had a sophisticated appearance and she dressed in beautiful, color-coordinated outfits with dresses, sweaters, vests, pants, and jackets to match. She always wore light makeup, rouge, and lipstick and had her hair styled once a week. Elizabeth was constantly cheerful and had a smile on her face. She loved being with people and enjoyed good conversation.

Although Elizabeth Pendleton was born in a rural mountain area, in an era *without* women's rights, financial aid for students, centers for adult students, distance learning, community encouragement for women to receive a formal education, and without community support for women to work outside the home, she overcame these obstacles and barriers because

of her inclination toward formal, informal, and nonformal learning. For example, after her mother died, she graduated from Holston High School and helped care for her younger sister, then she attended college during the Great Depression and received a 2-year degree from Hiwassee College. As an adult learner in her 40s, she returned to college and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree from East Tennessee State College (currently East Tennessee State University) in 1955.

In addition to being an adult student, Elizabeth was a remarkable lady who set an excellent example as a visionary leader, teacher, administrative supervisor, community servant, dedicated church member, friend, wife, mother, and grandmother to the four generations of her descendants who knew and adored her.

She lived a vibrant, optimistic, and rewarding life --- she loved her family, her church, and enjoyed interacting with people for 95 years. Elizabeth had unique traits, characteristics, beliefs, and attitudes that allowed her to celebrate life every day for 95 years. She was excited about life and learning and inspired others with her optimistic attitude.

During Elizabeth Pendleton's 95-year journey of lifelong learning, she believed that every day was a "new" day...and that each new day brought opportunities for us to improve ourselves and the world. She left a life legacy through the lessons she taught, the leadership she provided, the love that she conveyed, and the laughter she shared.

### Tree Metaphor: A Sustainable Society

Chapters 6 through Chapter 13 chronologically detail the life journey of Elizabeth. The chapters in her life are metaphorically represented by trees. Trees played a significant role in the sustainable society of the rural Appalachian Mountains. Families chose their home sites and built their houses based on the availability of timber as a raw material. They heated their homes and

cooked their food with the firewood gathered from nearby trees. Fruit trees provided nourishment for family members and animals. Trees roots stabilized the soil and prevented erosion of the hillsides so that gardens could be planted and fields provided for livestock. Men of the rural areas cut the timber and sold it to lumber mills for their livelihood. In their leisure time, families gathered for picnics under the shade of the trees that provided a natural play area for children on the limbs and branches. Throughout her life, Elizabeth appreciated the trees that surrounded her (as described below), and the chronology represents stages in her life:

Chapter 6 - the oak tree supported the foundation of the old Gammon house during her earliest years

Chapter 7 - the yellow poplar tree framed the siding and provided flooring for the remodeling of the Gammon house in 1913 during her childhood years

Chapter 8 – the sassafras tree root was used for flavoring tea and candy that she enjoyed during her teenage years

Chapter 9 – the elm tree served as the inspiration for the location of Elizabeth and Paris' first home

Chapter 10 – the cedar trees provided fence posts for the farm and filled the house with fresh evergreen scents each Christmas as she entered the middle adult years

Chapter 11 – the walnut trees zigzagged up the hillside behind the farmhouse and Paris often kept his granddaughters busy picking up the walnuts and placing them in brown paper bags – he told them he needed them to feed a friend's raccoon

Chapter 12 – the dogwood trees surrounded her with pink and white blossoms when she and Paris moved to the Dogwood Acres house in their senior years

Chapter 13 – the crepe myrtle tree planted in her yard on Country Drive blossomed into

her favorite rose-pink color which brought back pleasant memories in the last years of her life.

Figures 12 and 13 provide the genealogy trees of Elizabeth Gammon Pendleton's family and her descendants. The Figure 14 contains photographs of Elizabeth taken during the various stages of her life as presented in the biography in the succeeding chapters. The quotes in the biography, unless otherwise noted, are from audio and video recorded interviews with Elizabeth during the years of her life as she responded to various questions from family members: Louise Dickson, Paula Cate, and Chris Cate. For clarity, repeated words or phrases in conversations were occasionally omitted.

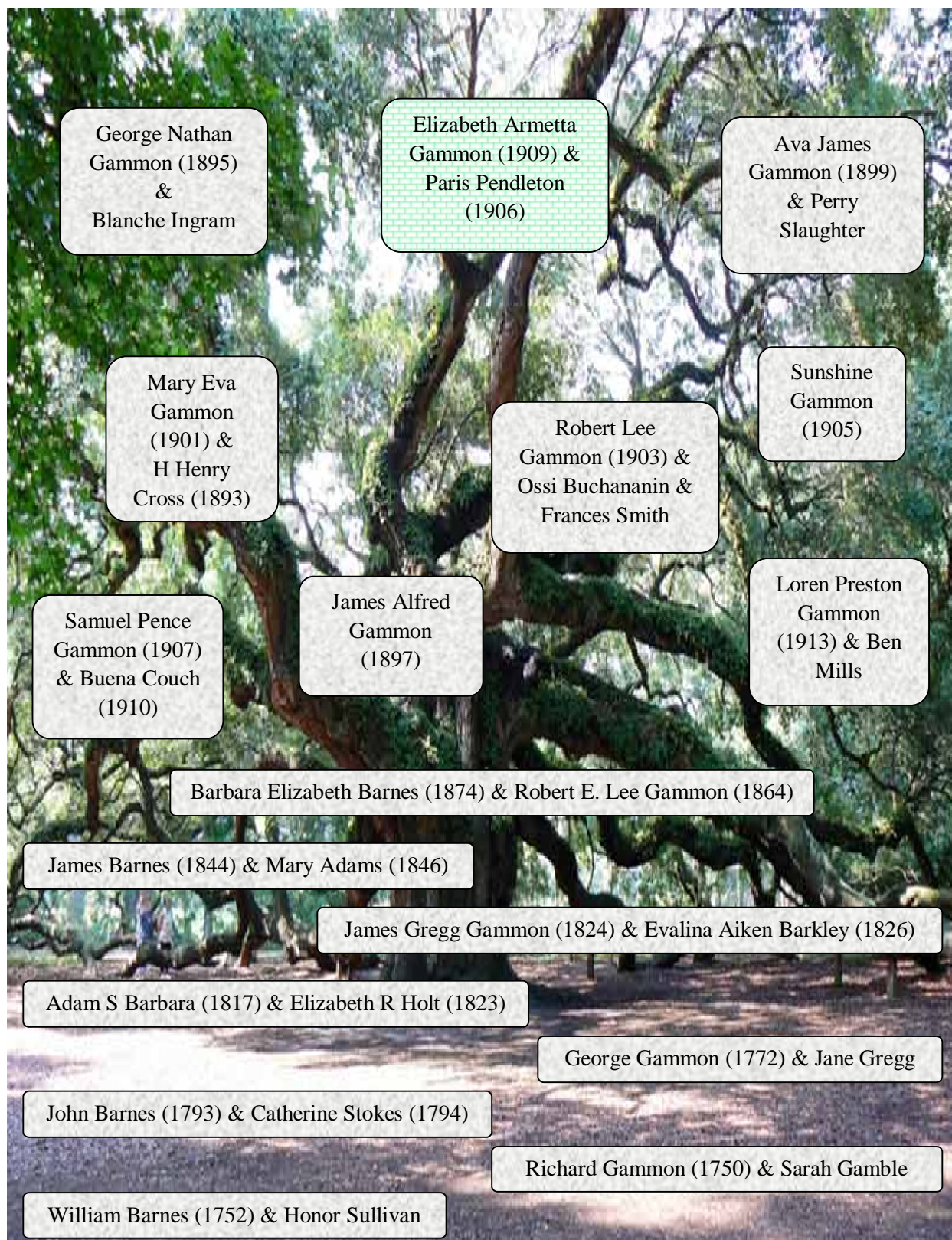


Figure 12. A View of the Barnes and Gammon Family Tree.





Figure 13. Descendants of Elizabeth Viewed In A Family Tree.



Elizabeth: Sassafras Tree



Elizabeth: Elm Tree Years



Elizabeth: Cedar Tree Years



Elizabeth: Walnut Tree Years



Elizabeth: Crepe Myrtle Tree Years

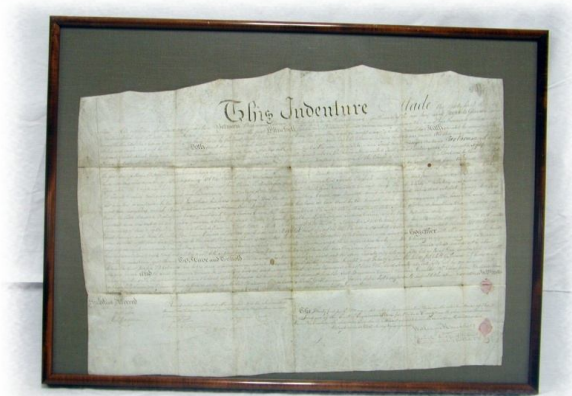
*Figure 14.* Photographs of Elizabeth at Various Ages.

## CHAPTER 6

### FAMILY ROOTS: THE OAK TREE YEARS

Elizabeth Armetta Gammon was born in the rural mountain and valley area of Sullivan County, Tennessee on September 25, 1909, at the home of her parents Robert Lee Gammon (1864 – 1961) and Barbara Elizabeth (Betty) Barnes Gammon (1875-1925). Their home was a sizeable, white frame, two-story house with a wide oak-planked porch that went nearly all the way around the house. The house was nestled on a hillside with a crystal clear spring and a creek running across a sloping meadow near the road in front of the house. There were five or six houses close by—all located on what had been “The Big Road” connecting Abingdon, Virginia with Jonesborough, Tennessee and then traveling on toward Knoxville, Tennessee. The dirt road was curvy and rocky often in poor condition due to weather conditions and occasional flooding.

Lee Gammon’s ancestors were property owners and inherited their home in Sullivan County from an Aunt, Sally Gammon Gilman, who had no other heirs. Lee Gammon’s mother, Evalina Barkley Gammon, also inherited property from the Barkley family, but it was in Danville, KY. Although it was a difficult journey to Danville on horseback, her son, Lee traveled there and spent time there during the 1880s. Another piece of property was inherited by the Gammon family that contained thousands of acres in Pennsylvania, but the taxes were not paid during the Civil War, and the family lost the property. The sheepskin deed, Figure 15, to the land in



*Figure 15. Sheepskin Deed to Pennsylvania Land*



Pennsylvania remains in the family as a relic.

Elizabeth's father, Lee Gammon, constantly bought and sold tracks of land often purchasing the land for the timber and then selling the land after removing the timber. The property on the "Big Road" has remained in the Gammon family for well over 100 years. During the early 1900s, a small one-room white frame schoolhouse, Sunrise, and a block church built by Wheeler Chapel Methodist church were located in sight of the Gammon house.

Whitfield Cross, Elizabeth's nephew, reported that he has Elizabeth's grandfather, Grandpa Barnes' will and that he "left each one of them [his children] a farm except Grandmother Gammon and she got \$25, 000. In 1917 \$25, 000 was a pretty good, pretty good sum." Cross added, "Grandpa Barnes died in 1917 or 1918. In 1917 he was picking cherries and he fell and injured his lungs and then whenever the flu was in World War I he must have pierced or punctured a lung. I don't know what, anyway he died." Cross said that the family "bought land" with the inheritance money and that part of the money was spent "for remodeling that house." An early photograph taken just prior to Elizabeth's birth depicts her parents, aunt and uncle, grandmother, and her older siblings in Figure 16.



*Figure 16. Gammon Family In Front Of Their Home in the Early 1900s.*

The front four rooms (two upstairs and two on the main level) of the house had been built in the late 1700s. In the historic records of Washington County, Tennessee, there is a record of marriage between Sara Gammon and Joseph B. Gilman on February 10, 1820. The birth date of Elizabeth Gilman Gammon (March 29, 1817) is listed on the inside cover of a book (*Thomas Wolley, Esquire, Late Captain of His Majesty's Ship Salvador Del Mundo, An Introduction to Naval Gunnery* by Robert Simmons, April 24, 1812) in the Gammon family archives as the daughter of Benjamin Gammon (September 1735) and Sarah Gammon (March 1737).

In the Lee Gammon house, Mr. Gammon (Lee) and his wife, Betty, had nine children and raised a nephew. The children were: George (1895-1970), Ava (1899-1979), Mary Eva (1901-1991), Robert Lee (1903-1965), Sam (1907-1991), Elizabeth (1909-2005), Preston (1914- 2004), a son, James, and daughter, Sunshine, died as infants. In addition to the children, Mr. Gammon's sister, Aunt Mettie Gammon Pence, and his mother, Evalina Barkley Gammon lived in the home most of their lives. The four eldest children appear in a photograph presented in Figure 17.



Figure 17. A Photograph of the Four Eldest Children of Lee and Betty Gammon.

The house survived the Civil War, but the memories of that tragic war lingered on and two specific stories were passed down generation after generation. The small rural mountain community had not suffered greatly at the hands of the Union or Confederate armies, although the Union army did steal horses and burn barns. As the family story described, it was the carpetbaggers, not the soldiers who tortured and beat the Gammon men and then stole their guns, horses, mules, and other family valuables. The women in the Gammon family learned to defend their homes and family. A hundred years after the Civil War, Elizabeth told of her Grandmother Gammon's experiences:

My grandparents, grand, Gammon grandparents, and Aunt Alice who was Eva Clegg's mother, Aunt Evalina, Aunt Ava, and Aunt Mettie . . . they would, of course, before the Civil War, they had plenty of money you know, and they had silver that had their initials engraved on their silverware and the carpet-baggers would like to get guns, if they found any guns.

As Elizabeth recalled the story, the Gammon women prepared for the carpetbaggers and Grandmother Gammon decided to hide their valuables and carry a pearl handled pistol to defend her family when the carpetbaggers neared the house:

See people back then had a lot of gold and Daddy had, we used to have that gold daddy got from his mother. Ah, but so they would see the carpet-baggers coming and they would run and take the silver, (and back then they got their sugar and flour and stuff, they had a big barrels, barrels) and they would hide it [gold and silver pieces] in the barrels of flour.

And one time they came and Aunt Alice, that's Cousin Eva Clegg's mother, [she] was very high tempered, and Grandmother Gammon was always afraid that she would make some of the carpet-baggers mad and they [would] maybe beat her or do things to her. And ah, but anyway . . . our grandfather had this long handle, pearl handle pistol. Well, and the pistol was still [at the homeplace], when I was a little girl growing up, that pistol was still at home. I don't know where it ever went to. Anyway, [it] had a pearl handle but Aunt Alice would put one in her dress pocket and then put an apron over her dress pocket so that they maybe if they were going to abuse her or anything, she was gonna shoot them. And ah, she would always get the pistol and carry it when she saw them coming, yeah.

Although Grandmother Gammon was strong, the intense fear of losing her husband was overwhelmingly grave for her. An incident occurred after the Civil War when the carpetbaggers were moving through the community stealing horses and according to Elizabeth's recollection of the story:

They [carpetbaggers] came one night and they knocked and ordered Grandfather Gammon to come out and they made him go to the barn and unlock the barn and they took all the horses, and they took his boots off of him. Well, Grandfather Gammon was pretty high tempered too and Grandmother Gammon was afraid that they would kill him, you know, and of course they kept him at the barn for a long time. I don't know, they took, decided, took, you know all of the stuff out of the barn they wanted and the horses and ah, -- and then when he came back -- and she went to bed and got up the next morning her hair was white . . . Fear, fear, she was afraid they would kill him, her husband, [and her hair turned] all just as white as snow.

Carrying on family traditions concerning education and religion were important in the Gammon family. According to Elizabeth, her paternal grandmother, Evelina Barkley Gammon:

was born in at Danville, Kentucky. And that was back before -- they [society] really didn't give much attention to educating the girls and they just had school a few weeks in January and February. They [society] emphasized teaching the boys and not the girls and her mother, her family hired, got an English tutor to come and teach my grandmother, Evelina Gammon.

Then after she was married and moved to Tennessee, Elizabeth's grandmother taught her own children. When asked what type of books she used, Elizabeth replied, "If I remember correctly, she got some of them [she] ordered [the books] from England, yes, because there were no textbooks to amount to anything, published at that time [that were available in the rural mountains of northeast Tennessee]. And what was published was mostly for the boys, you know." And Elizabeth was proud to explain that Evelina carried on the family tradition of educating her children:

she emphasized education a great deal and she said that . . . since she had been well educated with an English tutor, since that her grandchildren, her children and her grandchildren only got to attend school for a few weeks in the last part of January and February. And the reason for this was that they had to have it right after the Civil War

and they had to have the boys, the boys to work in, to do work because they needed money and they had to do some work of some kind to get money because at the close of the Civil War, they had confederate money, plenty of it until that confederate money was not any good then and so they didn't have any money because all of the money they had was no good. And my grandmother said the children need to be educated so she got books together and she had school at night at home for her children.

Elizabeth inherited her grandmother Evalina's rocking chair, a candle table, and an oil lamp. She recalled seeing Evalina rocking by the fireplace in the chair and she estimated Evalina's rocking chair to be nearly 200 years old. A photograph of the chair, table, and lamp appear in Figure 18.



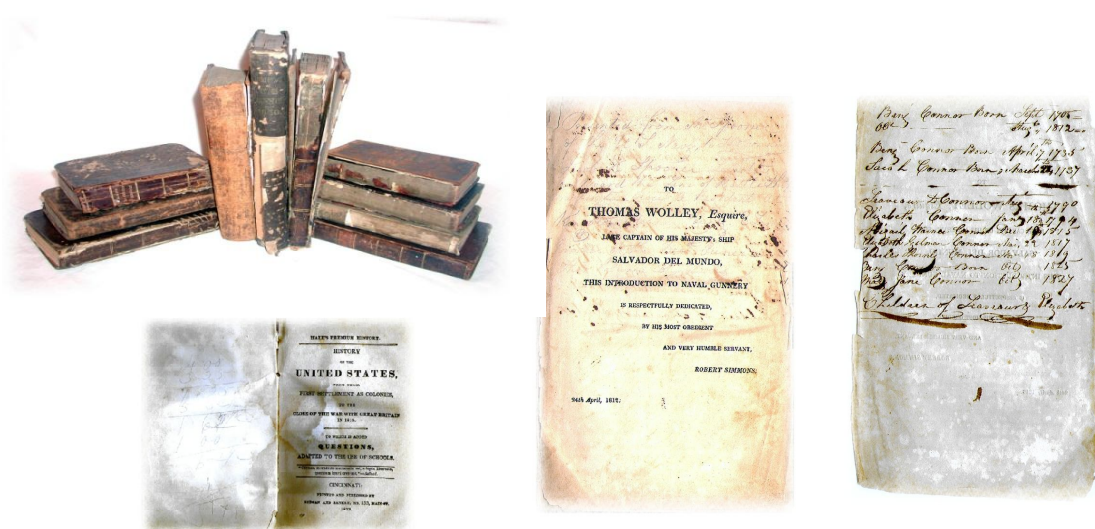
*Figure 18.* A Photograph of Gammon Family Heirlooms – Rocking Chair, Table, and Lamp.

Elizabeth was proud of her grandmother's emphasis on education and she expounded on her understanding of the early educational system in Sullivan County, Tennessee, after the Civil War into the early 1900s:

They built the, they got to starting to [build] schools to educate the boys that wanted to be lawyers and doctors and educators, professors because all of the teachers at this time were men and when they came to teach in a school they stayed one week with one family and another week with another family while they were there teaching.

But and when they went to school back at that time they had, they would have the boys sat on one side, all the boys were always all on the left hand side and then the girls were on the right hand side. And they, and then when they had a class they went up to recite like they are studying their arithmetic or whatever, then they had two long benches at the front of the, they did have the, they didn't sit in their seat, they went up and the girls sat on the right hand side on the long bench and the boys sat on the left hand side on the long bench. The boys and girls were segregated which [sic] was very much emphasized, the girls to themselves and the boys to themselves [sic].

Antique schoolbooks, novels, and religious books were handed down from generation to generation in the Gammon family. Several of the books are featured in Figure 19.



*Figure 19.* A Photograph of Books from the Gammon Family Archives That Include A Cookbook Inscribed With the Birth Dates Of Gammon Family Members from 1705 – 1827, A Photograph of the Title Page of A Gammon Book On United States History.

Books included in the family archives include two inscribed to Evelina Gammon, one history book states, "This book was presented to Evelina A. Barkley by Mr. Richard Refole in the year 1837." Another book is a cookbook that is inscribed, "Presented to Evelina Gammon by Sarah Gilman 1869."

The history book and the cookbook are listed below with other books that remain in the Gammon collection:

*Hale's premium History of the United States from Their First Settlement As Colonies to the Close of the War with Great Britain in 1815.* This book was printed in 1833 by Morgan and Sanxay in Cincinnati, Ohio.

*The Virginia Housewife: or Methodical Cook.* This book is by Mrs. Mary Randolph and has a copyright date of 1836 with the printing in Baltimore by John Blaskitt.

*Daboll's Schoolmaster's Assistant Improved And Enlarged Being A Plain Practical System of Arithmetic.* This book was adapted to the United States by Nathan Daboll and it was published in New London by Samuel Green with the copyright listed as 1825.

*Arlington Edition: The Poetical Works of Alfred Tennyson.* This book is inscribed to Bertie Hamilton for Regular Attendance and Perfect Lessons by a Social Studies teacher, Mary Rhea Barkley in 1893. It was published by Hurst and Company in New York, but there is not a copyright date listed.

*Abridgment of Mental Philosophy, Including the Three Departments of the Intellect, Sensibilities, and Will.* The title page lists this book as being designed as a textbook for Academies and High Schools by Thomas C. Upham, professor Mental and Moral

Philosophy in Bowdoin College. It was published in New York by Harper & Brothers Publishers in 1861.

*Statistical View of the United States, Being A Compendium of the Seventh Census.* This book is by J.D.B. DeBow, Superintendent of the United States Census and it was published in Washington by Nicholson, Public Printer.

There are several other religious books mostly Methodist and Presbyterian materials in the possession of the heirs of Elizabeth Gammon. Over the years, books from the Gammon library were given to various family members or lost.

When asked about her birth and her name, Elizabeth explained that Dr. Graves, a first cousin of her mother's from Piney Flats, Tennessee delivered her at home. In her words:

My mother's name was Elizabeth. That was part of her name. And then my aunt, an old maid aunt, who lived in the home [with us] . . . at the time I was born – her name was Armetta and so they gave me the name, my aunt's name which was Armetta but most everybody called her Mettie but anyway her name was Armetta and my mother's name was Elizabeth so that's the way I got Elizabeth Armetta Gammon. . . Aunt Mettie was my father's sister. She was an old maid and didn't get married until she was up in years too late to have any children but she lived with my father and until even after there were six children born to my father and she lived in the home, and she was like a second mother to us. Yes, and then she got married and moved away from the home and then her husband died . . . and she came back to live with my father and lived with my father until she died. With the exception of every once in a while about once a month she would go and spend a week or so with my sister, Mary Eva, or she would go and stay with my brother, Sam, maybe a week or two but she lived she made her home with my father until she died in 19 and 36.

Elizabeth described her three brothers as tobacco and cattle farmers who had other businesses:

Well, my oldest brother was George Nathan Gammon and he graduated from high school at Holston Institute and then he went into a kind of a lumber business. He bought tracks of lumber and cut it and sold it and did that for quite a while and then later he was in Suffolk, Virginia when he took a big job of lumber. And then when he took a big job of lumber work in Chuckey, Tennessee, where he met his wife, Blanche Ingram, and married her and then he came back to the Holston area and he started --he had several buses—school buses that he ran to Holston High School. Oh, grade school too, yes. And then he stayed in the bus business until he retired. [Sam] one of my brothers was a school



teacher and later a [Methodist] minister. [He] taught school for a while and then went to ministerial school and then he went into ministerial work, but they all had farm land.

Our father had given each of his seven [surviving] children a block of land and all of them always kept that as long as they lived then even though ... they had tobacco farmers that came in and put the tobacco out and raised it and cattle on the side. Of course they raised corn and some wheat a long, long time ago. But they had [tenant] farmers that grew their crops. They supervised it of course though.

Figure 20 presents a current (2008) aerial view of the farms that Lee Gammon bought and sold several times for the timber. He had at times an estimated 1,000 acres of land around the banks of the Holston River in Sullivan County, TN. In the 1930s he deeded part of this track of land to Elizabeth and her husband, Paris.



*Figure 20.* An Aerial Photograph Taken by Todd Dickson in February 2008 of Land Along the Banks of the Holston River Some of Which was Owned by Lee Gammon in the Early 1900s.

Elizabeth often told the story that her father called her Sister for years. He did not like the name Elizabeth because he felt that someone might call her “Lizzy.” Shortly after Elizabeth’s birth, Mr. Gammon remodeled the house adding nine more hardwood floored rooms and a large reception hall for a total of 13 rooms. The remodeled house had six fireplaces, was furnished with beautiful wood furniture with fine woolen rugs in the main rooms and braided rugs in the kitchen and children’s bedrooms. The parlor and the dining room had shining, nickel-plated stoves that Elizabeth described as being the “high style” in the early 1900s.

Betty Gammon, Elizabeth’s mother, managed the large household with help from her maiden sister-in-law, Aunt Mettie, and one or occasionally two tenant farmer’s wives. Betty usually did all the cooking, Aunt Mettie did most of the sewing, and Betty let the tenant farmer’s wives do the simple chores such as, peeling potatoes, peeling apples, and washing the dishes. The tenant farmers’ wives also helped with the clothes washing and scouring of the oak floors.

Lee Gammon, Elizabeth’s father, managed the farm with the help of five tenant farmers. He farmed and bought and sold property (cutting the lumber) for a living. They raised large amounts of wheat, corn, millet, and beef cattle. In addition, they had chickens, ducks, and turkeys some of which they sold in Bristol or Jonesborough or traded at local stores. They raised large gardens of vegetables (corn, potatoes, parsnips, sweet potatoes, beans, beets, turnips, lettuce, cabbage, carrots, tomatoes), fruit trees (apple, peach, plum, cherry, and pear), and berries (strawberries, blackberries, huckleberries, raspberries, and dewberries). Mr. Gammon took the extra produce to Bristol, Tennessee and sold it to a Mr. Godsey for his market on State Street near the Train Station.

Elizabeth spoke often of her father and she constantly quoted his words. One of her favorite stories that her father told was of a trip to Jonesborough, Tennessee, the regional

marketplace, that required a team of horses to pull a wagon and ford the Holston River. Elizabeth said that her father was both humored at first and then hurt by an incident that occurred on the trip to Jonesborough with an older field worker – possibly a tenant farmer. She re-told the story:

The river would be up sometimes, sometimes it would not be up and they could go right across without much trouble. But sometimes it would be up... [my father's] father had a fellow that worked for him and he didn't talk very plain. He was sort of sensible but anyway didn't talk very plain and [was] not very, he wasn't educated, he wasn't . . . very intelligent and so then the river was way up and the wagon was floating, and of course, the horses were kind of trying to swim, the fellow that was driving, (daddy was a small child) and the fellow that was driving [the team of horses] . . . said to my father, you know if we don't get across this river, [may] the Lord bless us or something like that, and then when they got across and got out and [all were] okay he gave the horses a great big whack with a whip, and shouted real loud with an oath 'come up here now ah horses' and that tickled daddy that he cursed them after [they were safe] ... then... [the experience hurt him because he [the man] had asked the Lord to help him while the water was up and didn't know whether they would drown or not and then when he got across then he cursed his horses.

Elizabeth's father, Lee Gammon was well known in the community and he accumulated approximately 1,000 acres of land in the Holston community (the address then known as Fordtown, Tennessee). He always kept 20 mules and oxen for plowing and clearing land. He usually kept six horses for pleasure riding and transportation. He was a successful farmer and dealer in livestock and timber. Elizabeth acknowledged, "Well, my father was a leading person in the community. A lot of people called on him for advice and for help. He was a very good farmer and always managed well and oh we did real well."

Often when Elizabeth was a child, after their late meal (supper), Lee Gammon would lead the family into the parlor, "and Daddy would play the violin and the rest of us would get up and dance and we would sing and it was this like a party. [We] had a real, real good time."

The grandson of Lee Gammon, Whit Cross of Blountville, Tennessee described Lee Gammon in an article in Volume I *Families and History of Sullivan, County Tennessee 1779-1992*:

At the age of 22, he had become the sole support of his mother and two sisters. In his youth, he worked for neighborhood farmers for twenty-five cents per day and then he carried the mail from Bluff City, Tennessee to three contract Post Offices in the Holston Institute area- Boring, Colby, and Lawson. He was an excellent hunter and dog trainer. (Holston Territory Genealogical Society, 421)

The ancestors of Lee and Betty were pioneer settlers of Sullivan County, Tennessee.

Lee's great-grandfather, Richard Gammon, was born on November 21, 1750 near London, England. He first came from England to the Tidewater area of Virginia and then to what is now Sullivan County. He married Sarah Gamble and he died on January 4, 1833 and was buried in Blountville, Tennessee. He was one of the three Commissioners appointed when Blountville was established in 1792.

Betty Barnes Gammon was the great-great granddaughter of Stephen Holston for whom the Holston River was named. Thelma Barnes, a family historian, wrote a brief biographical sketch of Betty Barnes Gammon's ancestor, William (Billy) Barnes. The biography appeared in *Families and History of Sullivan County, Tennessee* (1992). Barnes was born in Baltimore County, Maryland about 1752. He entered the Revolutionary War under the command of Colonel Robertson. After the Revolutionary War, he moved to Tennessee to serve "against the Indians." He received a military pension of \$33.33 per annum beginning in 1833. He married Honor Sullivan, who was said to have been a stowaway on a boat from Ireland. They had a land grant in the Centenary area near the Tri-City Airport. They had five children, Adam, was the father of James Barnes (Little Jim). Little Jim married Mary Ann Adams, who was the great granddaughter of Stephen Holston. Stephen Holston came from Scotland. He traced the Holston River in a canoe from its headwaters at his home in Virginia to where it joins the Tennessee. His daughter, Elizabeth, married Macaijah Adams who fought in the Revolutionary War from 1775-

1781. He is buried at Acuff Cemetery in Sullivan County (*Families and History of Sullivan, County Tennessee 1779-1992*, 341).

Little Jim Barnes, Betty Gammon's father, fought in the Confederate Army. He was a Captain and commanded a four-horse drawn cannon. He got a bullet through his hat while sighting his gun, and another time he rode for 3 days without food while being pursued by the enemy. He remained in the army until the surrender at Vicksburg. He was Superintendent of Wheeler's Chapel Methodist church for 13 years and was on the first Board of Trustees for Holston Institute, along with his brother George Barnes ((*Families and History of Sullivan, County Tennessee 1779-1992*, 341, 420).

## CHAPTER 7

### CHILDHOOD IN THE GAMMON HOUSE; THE YELLOW POPLAR TREE YEARS

In the early 1900s, Lee and Betty Gammon enjoyed traveling during the summer months. Elizabeth says that her father was the one who loved adventures. They took train excursions from Bristol to the beaches of Virginia and other interesting vacation places. Betty had gray-blue eyes, fair hair, and a baby-like complexion. She shopped for her traveling clothes in Bristol. Elizabeth remembers watching her mother try on the beautiful clothes and hats after she purchased them. The older sisters (Ava, and Mary Eva) and Aunt Mettie took care of the family while Betty and Lee traveled.

Aunt Mettie did not marry till she was in her 50s, when she married a man, Samuel Pence, said to have been without ambition, who worked occasionally as a watch repairman. He was from a wealthy family, and they did not provide financial support for Aunt Mettie after his death, and she was forced to come back and live at the Gammon homeplace.

Aunt Mettie had her own large bedroom upstairs in the house and she helped with the cooking and read to the young children and grandchildren (especially nursery rhymes). Mr. Gammon had two other married sisters, Alice Gammon Gookin, who was married to Charles Gookin and moved to his farm in Iowa, and Evelina Gammon Thomas, who was married to Robert (Bob) Thomas and lived in Jonesborough, Tennessee. Mr. Thomas owned a sizeable hardware store and sold farming supplies that were shipped in by railroad. As females born in a rural Appalachian mountain area (before women had the right to vote, own property, or have educational and professional goals similar to men), Elizabeth acknowledged that the women in her family were well-educated. She spoke of her father's sisters, Aunt Evalina, Aunt Alice, and Aunt Mettie who were born in the late 1800s and lived in Sullivan County, Tennessee:

they went to high school at Holston Institute [the school was originally (1885) Oakland Academy] and it was a real good outstanding school and people from different parts of Sullivan County came and boarded there and went to school and then those that were close transported there to go to school; but, back at the time high school had many advanced classes such as later that I didn't have in high school. They studied maybe four years of Latin and then they had four years of math, calculus and analytics besides the college algebras and other things.

Elizabeth's older sisters, Ava and Mary Eva, followed the female family education tradition set by their aunts. Whit Cross described the education of Elizabeth's sister, Mary Eva, his mother, and Elizabeth's sister, Ava, his aunt, at the turn of the century:

Well, see, they only had 10 grades at Holston. They had four year, four months – what you call free school. Then they had a school board and they paid – they owned the house where the principal lived. And then they had nine months school or eight months, whatever. And grandmother and grandpa [Lee and Betty Gammon] didn't like the principal they had over there. They didn't think he was competent. So Aunt Ava graduated from high school at Mary Washington College in Abingdon.

. . . Then, they all went to ah Maryville to high school. Then they started having 12<sup>th</sup> grades and then they got what they [the Gammon's] considered a good principal and so mother, [Mary Eva] came back and graduated from Holston High School. And then mother was at Maryville when the World War I flu epidemic was down there. She didn't take it. They were having to wait on [take care of] the other children in the dormitory, you know, that did.

Elizabeth shared her sister's college experiences as:

My other sisters went to college one entered college at Washington [Martha Washington College] in 19 and 18 in Abingdon, Virginia. She was taking music there from a German who was very well qualified in piano and that was back when we were having trouble with the Germans and Martha Washington College let the music teacher go because he was German and we were fighting the Germans. And then, she didn't go the next year after they let this German piano teacher go. She went to Maryville College [Maryville, Tennessee] then. . . Aunt Ava and Mary Eva both went to Maryville . . . that was Aunt Mary Eva's first year at college and then she went to Maryville then later then she went to Virginia Inter mont College [Bristol, Virginia] and she had a concert diploma in piano and a concert diploma in voice, both as a graduate from Virginia Inter mont.

Elizabeth added that Ava's husband, Perry Slaughter, was a graduate of Holston Institute and Tusculum College in Greenville, Tennessee. He ran a dairy farm and had quite a great deal of

farm land. Her sister, Mary Eva, married Henry Cross, and he went to a Bristol Business school and then he worked for the County in the Register of Deeds Department.

Elizabeth remembers taking numerous 20 mile trips to Jonesborough, the oldest town in Tennessee. She said that they “had to ford the Holston river in their wagon” to get to Jonesborough. Her father was well known in Jonesborough, as that was where he bought and sold his livestock. Elizabeth remembers playing on the streets in Jonesborough and walking under the porch of the old Inn (currently part of the International Storytelling Complex).

Elizabeth’s favorite childhood place to visit was Pinhook Store located approximately one fourth of a mile from the Gammon homeplace on Minga Road near a mill. Elizabeth loved to ride her horse there and get candy. She remembered that old men of the community gathered there around the pot-bellied stove discussing events of the day, and that she was uncomfortable when she had to walk through the crowd of men.

When asked what items were available at the store, Elizabeth replied:

Well, we bought a lot of things. We bought shoes, we bought material, we bought all kinds of like soap, stuff we had to have. Of course we didn’t buy any fresh vegetables or anything like that. And ah, you took eggs down and exchanged them for whatever you were gonna buy. But I bought shoes there, I bought material for dresses. And you got threads and thimbles and, and all kinds of sewing things. We sewed a lot.

Elizabeth recollected that Jim Newman ran the store when she was a very young girl and then later her Uncle Will Deck ... had a store there and then his wife died and he moved to Johnson City and later the store was known as Minga Store. Elizabeth explained that the Odd Fellows lodge had a meeting place up above the store there, “Well, Daddy was a member and a lot of the men in the community. Uncle Sam Lacy and the Decks and you know, upper class. We were thought to be one of the nice families.”



The emotions and social conditions from the Civil War were evident decades later in the early 1900s. For example, Elizabeth felt that “the fellow that ran the mill- he had children that went to school and they were lower [class].” When asked about the socioeconomic classes, Elizabeth responded that she felt like the children of the mill owner were of a lower class because they “dressed differently and did not have horses to ride to school.” The mill owners were the Utsmans. Elizabeth implied another possibility for the social class differences was due to Union and Confederate politics and while most families in the area were Democrats, possibly the Utsmans were Republicans:

Yeah, and that whole community, maybe that’s the reason we figured we lived a little better than they did [sic]. Ah, they, ah everybody was democrats back then in the community. All the Barnes were Democrats, the Decks were Democrats. Well, it was, you know it was a confederate; it was southern, southern.

Elizabeth recalls that when she was a very young child they had an outhouse. Another outbuilding on the farm was a large, old, two-story building where the slaves had lived. The slaves stayed on after the Civil War and her grandmother cared for them when they were sick and helped them discipline their children. Elizabeth re-told stories told to her by her Aunt Mettie:

Now then after the Civil War many of the Gammon slaves remained with the Gammon family and but those who remained when they got sick my grandmother would go she would doctor them and Uncle Jim, I believe it was or one of the slaves they called him Uncle, ah my grandmother would go, he was sick and she would go and sit up and doctor him and sit up at night with him.

Now grandmother was the one that, that saw that the slaves had food and everything and she tried to kind of teach them to speak correctly. In fact, she tried to teach everyone she came in contact with to speak correctly they said. So they were real, real responsibility they were just mostly like they had a family, a family and extra family because they had to see that they had clothes and they had to see that they were well fed and taken care of as best as they could.

She tried to discipline even the slaves’ children and she had one of the slave boys who stole a ham from her one time and as punishment she sliced a whole big ham and fried it and she called this boy that stole it to come in and sit and eat all of the ham that she had

fixed on the platter and now that was her way of punishing him. So I guess really and truly he didn't steal any more hams.

In later years, the Gammons maintained relationships with the families of former slaves. The term Uncle and Aunt seemed to be used affectionately, but the story that is told displays an issue of trust:

Now Jim Greezy and his wife, (Uncle Jim Greezy and Aunt Morandi), they were two of the slaves that remained with the Gammon family until they died and everybody, the family called them Uncle Jim and Aunt Morandi. And Grandmother said that they would want to trade things with her like, she tried to teach them to sort of work and be on their own so but they would pick berries and bring in and the family always made molasses back then. You couldn't get sugar like you do this day in time. She would pay them and one time they brought berries in a container and they said Ms. Gammon this is, this is a gallon of berries and we, and so she looked at it and she knew it wasn't quite a gallon. She said well I tell you I will just empty the berries out and the same bucket that they brought it, empty the berries out of the bucket and she says then if this is the gallon of berries I will give you a gallon of molasses using their own measuring of things and so Grandmother filled the berry container up with molasses. But then as they went out the door were leaving she heard, she heard ah the woman say to her husband as they left that the house, she said who got beat me or Mrs. Gammon?

Over a hundred years after the end of slavery, near the end of her life, Elizabeth admonished her granddaughter, Louise Dickson, to remind the family not to disturb a square grove of cedar trees on the top of the hill across from the Gammon home because the grove of trees served as a living fence around the graveyard of the Gammon family slaves.

Celebrations in the 1910s included family birthday parties. Elizabeth recounts, "In the summer we had parties out on the meadow in front of the house. We had a good-sized creek that was damned up making a pond and the springhouse kept everything nice and cold. There was always plenty of food. We had big picnics with vegetables, chicken, turkey, and all kinds of food." She especially recalled her father's birthday in September when the weather was nice. They had the party in the afternoon and all the aunts especially her mother's sisters who lived nearby, "I recall Aunt Bertha [Cross] and Aunt Allie [Lacy]," uncles, and cousins came. She

specifically remembered several attendees, “Cousin Anne, my Cousin Sue Deck, my father’s first cousin, which was ah, lived right beside us and Joe and Robin and some of the children would come. I can’t remember Cousin Sue’s husband, John. He died early and I don’t remember him coming, but the children would come. There would be a big party because there were several of us and the other friends and neighbors out of the neighborhood.”

The party lasted until dark. Elizabeth does not remember anyone bringing presents or putting a candle on the cake, but they did have delicious deserts that her mother made, “you know Mother did a lot of cooking and she would have pies, fruit pies and custard pie and cake, yeah.”

In the winter, birthday parties were held in the house. The adults would gather in the parlor, reception hall, and dining room and the children would play downstairs in the basement. Elizabeth remembers the large fireplace and having fun playing with the other children.

As a family, the adults and children sometimes gathered around the piano. “We sang songs like “Marching Through Georgia,” “Blue Heaven,” and “Three O’clock In The Morning.” Elizabeth said, “My sister, Ava, played the piano well, we all stood around the piano, we enjoyed it. My most precious memories of my father are when he would play his fiddle or his French harp (harmonica). He played very well. We had a lot of company and sometimes we danced.” When asked what type of dancing she replied, we did a kind of a two-step to songs like “Turkey In The Straw.” She remembers her father playing “Yankee Doodle” and “Way Down Upon the Swanee River.” She did not know how her father learned to play the fiddle. In later years, she said they gathered around and they wound up the Victrola, then put on records and danced.

Music and dancing was a large part of family gatherings. Elizabeth described a child’s birthday party:

Well, all the children's birthday parties were just kind of like, they were all alike. Ah, we either met in the meadow or we had it in the house and we had plenty of food and we had of course, when we had it in the house later [in later years] we had a Victrola. Of course, the Victrola had no electricity. You had to wind it up and put your record on and we would dance to that sometimes, and then sometimes we would dance to father's fiddle, playing the fiddle.

Elizabeth did not recall the name of any dances, but explained, "two of us would hold hands and would walk around and round the room doing like a two step you know, which we don't dance that now, but anyway, keeping tune to the music." She said they held "hands with a partner and danced around in a circle...sometimes her brother called the steps. "

For holidays, the community often gathered to celebrate. Elizabeth reminisced and unknowingly provided an insight into the family's positive attitude toward slavery and the grandson of the family's former slaves:

. . . at Thanksgiving and the Fourth of July and Valentine's. Ah, well, more often than that sometimes. . . We would invite a lot of people in the community to come. It would be quite a few. But we would all go together and [hire] this Doc Dulaney, who had been, his grandmother had been a slave of the Gammons. He was a grand cook and he would maybe roast a pig or roast a big thing of beef and cook all kinds of food and we would go and eat and then of course, we would dance and have music and dance and have a good time.

Doc Dulaney owned a building in Blountville off what is currently Big Hollow Road and he rented the building for special occasions. Elizabeth recalled, ". . .his [grand] parents had been slaves, well and he would, he would come to the, our homes. Like if we were gonna have a big wedding. If we were [sic] gonna have an unusual celebration, we might have him to come home, come to the home and cook the food. Yeah." At the parties the music might include banjos and guitars:

And sometimes somebody would play the piano, because my two sisters played the piano. But most all the girls in the family, my cousins . . . played the piano. My sister, Ava, was the oldest in the family and she played the piano real well and she would play

all kinds of songs and we would stand around the piano and sing. I can remember we enjoyed that.

Attending church was a community gathering event – one that the women and the children looked forward to attending. Elizabeth recollected the early 1900s when the Methodist preachers were circuit riders:

Well, the old fashioned preachers that came around, and the church I went to we had one, the circuit had one preacher. You had seven churches and you would have to have, ah he just got to each church once, once a month, once a month and, and ah some of the churches you had to go to at night or, or midday or sometimes because when the days were short, ah but anyway my minister always came and when the minister came to the church some of the women in the community always they would decide the women who ... him the minister will go home with me for lunch you know. And that was decided and of course then the ministers then, the minister always before he started to preach you always had a sort of a, some sort of a chair, comfortable chair to back behind where the preacher stood to preach. And but anyway he always got down on his knees with his back to the audience or to the congregation . . . and kneel down and said a prayer and I can remember as a little girl sometimes it would be a long prayer. Of course I guess I didn't understand it, maybe it wasn't, but I can remember very well then, you know. And most all of the churches they didn't have pianos. They used organs and those organs were the old-fashioned organs.

Her most precious memory of her mother is when she read Bible stories to her. Her favorite story was “Joseph and his Coat of Many Colors.” She said, “my mother had a Bible Storybook and I still remember the pictures. I loved that story.” Her mother was remembered in the community for her strong faith and desire to teach her children Christ's love. Mrs. Gammon's family was Methodist and Mr. Gammon was Presbyterian. The Presbyterian Church was approximately 10 miles away in the county seat of Blountville, Tennessee so the family attended the Wheeler Chapel Methodist Church that was located within sight of their house as presented in Figure 21.



*Figure 21. A Photograph of Wheeler Methodist Church Taken Prior to Demolishment of the Church to Make Room for Extension of the Tri-City Airport.*

Elizabeth's early memories are of walking to the church with her mother. She said that her mother had a place on the way to the church where she stopped to pray. There was a certain rock and she knelt to pray there. Elizabeth said she was a wiggly little girl and wanted to hurry on to church, but of course, had to wait until her mother prayed:

We lived real close to the church and . . . we were so close, we just walked and I remember mother would, we had to walk across the creek and then go up a little path then we got to the road. Although we were kind of on the road but half set back a little bit and she would be on her way to church and maybe having a revival and she would say Elizabeth now you sit down here. I want to say a prayer before I get to church and she would kneel at a certain rock. It was a good size rock, and I would sit on the rock and twist and turn of course while she would say her prayers and then we would go on.

Another memory of walking to church with her mother she pleasantly recalled was, "When honeysuckle was in bloom, it smelled so nice. My mother would stop along the way to church and pluck some honeysuckle to pin on her suit...and she put some on me too."

Immediately Elizabeth added, at church, "the men sat on the left and the women on the right."

Elizabeth said, “my white-blond hair was curly and kinky, my mother would twist my hair around and make five or six big curls...then she would say, ‘Elizabeth sit still and don’t mess up your curls’...I was twisty and prissy and could never sit still.”

Betty Gammon was very active at Wheeler Chapel Church and with the school activities of her children. The Wheeler Chapel Church was on a circuit with seven other churches, so the preacher only came about once a month. The church was only one large room with a pot-bellied stove to heat it in the winter. The women of the church planned which one of them would take the preacher home for dinner after the church service. Elizabeth also recalls having Revivals at the church. It was an important event and sometimes the preacher preached on Saturdays and Sundays. They often had dinner on the grounds of the church and everyone came. The church was built on land donated by one of Elizabeth’s relatives.

The song leader at Wheeler Chapel was Alec Ford; he was the grandfather of country music legend, Tennessee Ernie Ford. He was a gifted singer and the congregation liked to watch him “raise his arms and direct the singing” recounts Elizabeth. She smiled and said, “I still remember him singing ‘In the Sweet By and By’.” The church had a pump organ and women in the church volunteered to play. Elizabeth remembers that the women of the church had an active Missionary Society that raised money and sent it other places for ministry. Helping other people was important to the church—they thought themselves to be blessed. Elizabeth often mentioned Ernie Ford’s grandfather leading the hymns in the one-room church. She described the church and the separation of men from women and boys from girls that was socially appropriate in the early 1900s:

Ernie Ford’s grandfather ah was a member of my church and he always, he always led and directed the singing and Ernie sang just exactly like his grandfather. And I can remember when I was a little girl I can see him yet up, waving his hand and he hadn’t had

any formal training. He just got up there and directed with his hand and everybody sang and, and he sang beautifully.

Well, Ernie sang just exactly like him and I can remember when they were singing the ‘Sweet by and by’ and all those old hymns you know that you don’t hear now even at all. Anyway, he sang beautifully.

And then of course we just had, our church just had one room. But the men, adult men had their class and adult women had their class. They didn’t sit together, no that was unheard tell of, didn’t sit together and but the children would sit together but then the, and they will be in one ah, ah corner of the church and then the young man they, boys they sat somewhere to themselves ah you know and, and, and boys and girls just didn’t mix. . . I was in one part of the church and the boys were in the other part of the church and most of the boys in the community were my cousins so there wasn’t much of anybody when I was little and growing up to look at.

When Elizabeth was a little girl she attended a one-room school for her first few years of school. The Sunrise Grammar School was within sight of her house, but walking there meant walking down a hill, across a creek, up a hill, and around a bend. A photograph of the school is presented in Figure 22. Elizabeth loved horses and she rode her horse to school as often as possible. She rode bareback to school right up to the porch and dismounted onto the porch. She gave her “horse a whack and the horse went home by itself.”





*Figure 22. A Photograph of the Sunrise School Where Elizabeth Attended First and Second Grade. The Photograph was Taken Prior to Demolition.*

Elizabeth had two horses. Pearl was a good old horse that took her wherever she wanted to go. She remembers that a favorite pastime was to ride her horse to the store. Her mother put eggs in a basket and Elizabeth took the basket to the Pinhook Store (near the current old Minga store building on Minga store road), and traded the eggs for whatever her mother needed. Then, if she had enough trading power left over, she got herself a piece of hard candy. Her other horse was named Bird. Elizabeth said, “the horse got the name Bird because she could fly...she was a very fast horse. Bird could out run the cars.” The horses had to be shod and Elizabeth told of her love for horses and her experience with shoeing Pearl and racing Bird:

I really loved horses and I would get up, one of my horses’ name was Pearl. She was a female horse and she was real, real gentle, but back then you know, we rode our horses an awful lot and then, ah the roads then out in the country were rock and they kind of you know, you had to keep your horses shoed.

Well, Pearl that was my horse didn't like to be shoed and but I had to take her and had the shoes put on and there was a blacksmith oh just oh not too far away. He was a Ford. He was a brother to Tennessee Ernie's grandfather and Uncle Jim everybody called him. He wasn't colored but everybody called him Uncle Jim. He was real, real fat. Oh when he was hot, the perspiration just rolled off of him.

And Pearl, my horse didn't like to be shoed. She didn't like her shoes, you know, changed, taken off and nailed and new ones nailed back on because they wore. And so, she would try to bite Uncle Jim while he was down bent over trying to shoe her and ah he would get mad and, and then I would have to go and hold her real tight. She wouldn't bite me but she would bite at him on his behind. And and it would make him so mad, of course I don't blame him, but anyway I would have to hold her all the time that Uncle Jim was shoeing her.

But [otherwise] Pearl was, she was a real gentle mare. Now she didn't, she didn't travel very fast but then I had another horse that was called Bird and that was a male horse, ah I believe it was a male horse, yeah and, and anyway no it wasn't. It was female, Bird though could, she could, we called, the reason we called her Bird was because she could, she could run so fast. She could run ah, ah on rock road. If the road was a little bit muddy, she could run faster than the car could, ah you know, ah, ah because she could run so fast and we would get out on the field.

I would run her with my cousin. My cousin liked to ride too, Ruby Barnes, who married a Duncan, Ruby Barnes Duncan. And she, her, her horse was never were very good at ah, at, at ah, ours were trained horses kind of. Ah but anyway, I would start racing with, with her and my horse, especially if I was riding Bird, would just out run. We raced and I could get there a long time before she did, yeah.

Elizabeth recollected another incident with horses that seemed to give her cause for concern about her younger sister, Preston. She recalled wanting to explain to her father that an accident that injured her sister was not due to racing the horses:

And then, but one time then, my sister and I, we would ride on Sunday afternoon, and one time we went riding. My sister and I did, and she was real, she was younger, and ah it was always said that the horses were afraid of snakes, and it was in the winter time, we were riding out this narrow road and all of a sudden the horses gave a little snicker and they whirled and started, we presumed, we thought there was a snake. They started flying back to the barn and my sister was really, real, real young.

I was four years older than she was and when she got to the barn the horse was, made a curve to turn into the barn and, and threw her off and hit her head against the barn door, and it kind of made her sick. But she got over it, but ah anyway, my father thought we were racing but we were really weren't racing, the horses just saw something that scared them and they whirled and took off flying. A lot of my time, and I would ride and go to

the store and I would ride and go to school and I would ride and go just a lot of places. I loved horses.

Although Elizabeth spent a lot of time outside with on the farm playing, her mother wanted her to look “presentable” for church and other occasions:

Oh yeah, I had really curly hair. My hair was just kinky and she, before we went to church, she would brush my hair and she make it, it was blond, well I was a white blond, really and she would twist it in great big long curls, big round curls. Maybe I would have five or six around my head and she would say now Elizabeth you sit down, you sit still and don't get the curls out of your hair. And of course you know I didn't like to sit still ah, ah you know, but anyway she would tell me to.

At the Sunrise School, there was one teacher for all eight grades. The boys sat on the left and the girls on the right. The school was furnished with double-seated desks. The teacher had sisters sit with sisters and brothers with brothers. If you did not have a sibling near your age in the class, then you sat with a cousin. Elizabeth had to sit with her eighth grade first cousin, Sarah Deck. Sarah was sickly most of her young life, and was impatient with Elizabeth as a first grader who was “wiggly.” A significant memory of the school involved getting a drink of water:

. . . you had to go to a spring and carry water and bring the water in and there was always a dipper hanging. Well, we had a cooler, we had a cooler and, and sometimes, sometimes we – yeah we used it, but sometimes it will be in the bucket. But children that could afford it, had these little folding tin drinking cups and you carried your own drinking cup to school with your lunch, if you stayed for lunch, of course, I came home.

Another memory of the one-room schoolhouse involved the teacher organizing the student lessons so that the students moved from their seats in the room closer to the pot bellied stove when the teacher called them forward to read or spell:

And of course you just had one big bellied, pot bellied stove in the middle, in the middle of this big, this one room. That's all the heat you had and and it was always, you just used wood in it, yeah, yeah. And –and each class, the teacher, I don't know how she worked it out but, anyway, she like I remember my, my reading class, and my whatever [class], we had little seats at the front and she hit a bell and said so and so, class and you would go up, and you would read, you would spell, whatever it was, you know, sitting on the front seats. I don't know how we ever kept warm, but I guess we did though.

Elizabeth was an active little girl and she remembered being in the first grade at Sunrise School, “I was in the first grade and I, I would get so bored. I wanted to get down under the seat and scramble around and just do nothing, you know.” After 90 years, she knew the first name of her first grade teacher, “Daisy, Daisy is all I remember. Her name was Daisy” and she recalled that another one of her elementary teachers was Miss Mattie Millsap. During the early 1900s, the schools hired teachers who had only one year of high school. She recollected, “we [the school] had an outhouse. We didn’t have any running water. Yeah, the girls had their outhouse and the boys had theirs. It was separate, two different places, yeah.”

In another later interview, Elizabeth provided a more detailed description of her experience at Sunrise:

And we had big long seats, double seats, double seats and they had a plank desk in front or a desk in front and then they had a shelf underneath that to put your books and things. That’s where you kept your things. But your coats and things had a coat, not a coat hanger but just a – a hook at the back of the room and you took off your coat or whatever you didn’t want to wear that day. Ah, in the winter time it was so cold because the first school I went to was heated by a potbellied stove, just in the middle of the school room. And ah and the water, there was a spring nearby and some of the big boys always went with a bucket and carried water to the school and put it in a water fountain. And it didn’t have any electricity. It was just like it came out of the spring.

And then you went over, you had little cups, I remember, they were little tin cups that folded and you kept those in your desk and when you want to drink you open that cup up, a cup that folded and when you want a drink you opened the cup up and ah then went over to the water cooler and drew you some water and that’s the way we had water. And the, the bathrooms, we didn’t have any bathrooms inside. They had they called an outside toilet, had one for the girls and one for the boys, yeah.

Elizabeth remembered hearing that “earlier in the 1800s the teachers were men because they didn’t have any women teachers because the women weren’t educated.” She reported that the male teachers “would stay a week at one place and a week at another place in the community and ... [there] weren’t [sic] too many families that were participating in the school system.”

Elizabeth remembered that there had been an old Gammon log school house near the old

Wheeler Chapel Methodist Church that was within sight of the Gammon home. The Gammon Log School is listed in *Adventures in Education* as being a “one-room log school built in the early 1800s” and located “in the Holston Community and served as a “Methodist Meeting House from 1824 – 1866 when the congregation built a church and named it Wheeler Chapel.” The log house was “still in operation in October 1888 and was replaced by the Sunrise School” (Barnes, 1985 p. 32).

Elizabeth remembered that when she attended in the early 1900s, her teachers were mostly women. She defended women commenting that the schooling that women received was different from the schooling of men, “they [the women] still had special education of some kind, like my grandmother had.”

At the time that Elizabeth attended the Sunrise School, she estimated that there were “about 15 families” with children attending the school. There were children from the first grade through the eighth grade in the same class. She explained, “the teachers weren’t highly, highly educated. There was no general system to say what they would teach at what time. They just taught sort of you know off hand like, if you will excuse the saying.” Then Elizabeth spoke of her memory of the teacher’s instructional methods, the courses taught, and their attempt to teach correct English grammar:

Well. I doubt she [the teacher] had lesson plans. She had a sort of spelling book that she followed. And on Friday afternoon, every Friday afternoon we had what they called a spelling contest, you know, and we’d line up and the teacher would give, you know [the teacher gave words out to each student] and whoever could spell the best was the winner of the contest.

They had certain sections [grade level divisions] of the spelling contest. . . And some of the children were excellent spellers. Of course they didn’t teach many things except arithmetic, reading was taught, that was the first thing, reading and arithmetic, and even through the eighth grades, of course they taught some English and it was at that time so many people, a lot of the children that, that went to school, like when I did were [tenant] farmers’ children.

And the teacher, as well as my grandmother, tried to teach the children to speak correctly and not say ... and ain't and ... and all that sort of thing. Ah, you know, words that generally aren't used. Of course it was a hard job because the children would hear all that at home while then it is hard for them to come to school, it takes them a long time to learn, yeah.

Elizabeth recalled that Daisy, her first teacher, boarded with her family, "And she stayed, like back then when I was going to school, she stayed with someone in the family, boarded with someone in the family. And she boarded with my grandmother." Elizabeth added a description of the teacher and hinted that some of the older boys were romantically attracted to Daisy. She was, "sort of the young like lady, yeah. In fact some if the, some of the boys in the community, the older boys liked to go with her a little bit."

When questioned about her motivation to attend primary school and the age she began school, she responded as if it were fresh in her mind:

I didn't go to school until I was seven. Back at this time, children didn't start school until they were about seven. Of course, there was no law that said you had to start at six or seven or ten. You started whenever you wanted to. For some children, they insisted to let them start when they were a little younger than that.

She described her attitude toward school, "I enjoyed going to school. We played games. We took up school at 8:30 a.m. and stayed until four and we had a recess at midmorning and we got out and played games. Of course, the games were mostly baseball or rose around the ring around the roses or do something like that." As stated earlier, the school was close to her home, so she walked to school or rode her horse:

I lived close I would walk with some of my, I was younger than the rest of my brothers and my sisters and they were going to a better school. . . They went to Holston, but I went to Sunrise and I would walk unless it was raining, or if there was snow on the ground. If it was, then I had a horse whose name was Pearl, and I would ride my horse to school.

[The school] had a porch along the front and I would ride the horse up to the edge of that porch and I'd get off onto the, onto the porch so as to stay out of the rain and then I'd smack my horse on the back and ah, and we were so close and the horse would run home.

She explained that she went home for lunch because she lived close to the school, but that some children who lived far from the school brought their lunch, “but it would just be a biscuit and .... It was homemade like bread and it was just a buttered biscuit and maybe with a little bit of butter and jelly would be on it or something rather apple, orange and apple.” Elizabeth recalled that they did not have access to fresh citrus fruit, “We didn’t, have oranges too much because they were shipped in. But you had apples and pears and grapes and fruit that you took.”

As for grades at Sunrise, she stated, “I think the teacher just assumed that we were learning for another grade. I can’t remember ever getting a grade card when I first started [school].” Elizabeth’s family was concerned that their children excelled in school:

My father, was – his mother had seen that he was real good in arithmetic and everything and father would, even, he would help you to learn to count and multiplication table and that sort of thing, at home. Of course the teacher had so many grades [of student in the same classroom] and had so much things to, parents had to help, you know, . . . if they were interested in seeing that their children got a good education.

Elizabeth did not remember having any homework when she was in the first or second grade; however, she changed to Holston Institute in the third grade, and then she had to study. She described the transportation to Holston, “you rode the horse or you went in a buggy, or if there was more than one had to go out of a family. Well, some of, some of them didn’t have horse, didn’t have buggies at the time because that was kind of a hard time, but they would walk.”

Elizabeth did not walk, but she knew a classmate who walked to Sunrise, which was maybe a half a mile, but then later when the classmate was older, she walked to Holston Institute, which was about 2 or 2 ½ miles. And the classmate went until she graduated, graduated in high school and never missed a day, rain or snow she walked to school [everyday].”

The families who had horses and buggies boarded the horses and buggies with farmers while the students attended class, “we had two farmers on either side of the school building, one

below and one above. And ah, they would keep your horses. You take them in and they would take off the saddle and the bridle and whatever they had on and then they would feed them something at lunch time.” Elizabeth felt that her father paid the farmers to board their horses and buggies because they had several children attending Holston – the boys rode horses and the girls went in the buggy.

Elizabeth attempted to recall learning to read, “I can’t even remember when I learned to read. I will say that grandmother [Evelina Gammon] lived until I was three or four years old and she started teaching, she thought we had to learn and I guess she taught me to read before I started school. I can’t remember not being able to read.” When Elizabeth was at Holston, she said that “they had what they called the primary then, just like ah kindergarten here. And then they had the first grade and the second grade, then, they had the third and the fourth and the fifth grade. Then they went to the sixth, seventh and eighth all together [in the same classroom].”



## CHAPTER 8

### SCHOOL DAYS AND HOME WAYS: THE SASSAFRAS TREE YEARS

A difference between Sunrise Primary School and Holston Institute, a Sullivan County public school with lower and upper grades, concerned the class seating arrangements for the upper grades, “At this time though when I went to Holston, when I was in the fourth and fifth grades, the girls didn’t, they didn’t put the girls on the right hand side. We sat among; maybe boys would sit in front of you and then girls and there would be boys behind you.”

Elizabeth knew that the transfer to Holston Institute was positive because Holston was one of the best schools in Sullivan County. At Holston, they had one teacher for every two grades. They had sports – football, baseball, and basketball, a literary society, an Adelphian society, a school yearbook, and voice and piano lessons in addition to the regular school curriculum. Elizabeth proclaimed that during the late 1920s, Holston offered an excellent 4-year education with 4 years of Latin and math with calculus and analytics. Some of the students who lived in remote areas had great difficulty traveling to school due to poorly maintained roads and rough terrain. These students often paid a fee to board (live) with families who nearby Holston school so they could attend school.

At Holston in the upper grades and high school, Elizabeth noted that there were gender differences in expectations for students “they emphasized the boys getting educated and there were, I mean the girls, the boys getting educated the boys came first you know. Used to be a lot of the teachers after you got up to the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth, they were men teachers, most all of them [were] men, men teachers.” She also recalled that some of the farm boys were rough, “And the men teachers had a hard time, hard time disciplining them. They were big boys and raised on the farm and worked in the farm fields and ah they were pretty rough.”

Elizabeth's favorite teacher was Mr. Clark, the principal, "Mr. Clark was the principal and of course he had to teach subjects. He was, I guess, one of my favorites. Ah, then it was, another favorite of mine was ah Mr. McReynolds and he taught math and science. Well, he taught science, yeah, taught biology, and then another one of my favorite teachers, well I liked all of my teachers." She also recalled one teacher in particular, "Ava Hicks, she taught English, and she taught home economics too. I don't know how that was worked out but that's what she did."

Elizabeth announced that her motivation toward attending school was inspired some by Mrs. Betty Anderson, who later became secretary to the superintendent. Elizabeth felt that "she taught she taught well and she saw that you learned what you were supposed to learn, and she taught with the right attitude, attitude towards school. She placed not too much emphasis on grades, but more emphasis on learning." She said, "That's right, learning, which you were classified whether the child is learning real well, you know, in places they had, I guess we got a grade card and I can't remember when we started getting grade cards. I can't remember we got any grade cards when I first started going to first and second grade."

Elizabeth's favorite memories of attending Holston and later Hiwassee College included sports. She explained:

Oh, well in the grade schools like in the third and the fourth and the fifth there wasn't-- [we] didn't play basketball, the boys and the girls, either one. But then, I played basketball . . . I hate to brag but I was so good that they let me play with the varsity team [when she was in 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade]. And then we would have tournaments once a year for a week and we would go to ETSU, State Teachers College, and there would be a big tournament there with basketball teams from all over the high schools in Sullivan County.

She continued explaining that Holston did not have a school gym at that time, so "we practiced and we played our games out on dirt, out on the, on the school, school yard." She stated, "Just

dirt, just dirt, yeah. It was marked off and had sawdust on it but we played, played on dirt, we practiced out on a dirt playground too, yes.” For all but one year of her high school basketball games, the coach for the girls’ and boys’ teams was the principal of the school. For one year, one of the teachers was her coach. She even recalled some of the ballgames, “We played all the high schools in Sullivan County which was Bluff City and Piney Flats and Sullivan Gardens and Blountville. I believe that was all. I think we just had four big high schools.” The teams traveled in a bus, “Yes, we had a bus then. The county furnished a bus in high school, yeah. Some of my relatives owned the buses [and drove under a contract with the county] and we . . . they took us different places for our scheduled games.”

Elizabeth had a positive high school experience, “Oh yes, I enjoyed it very, very much. Yes, yeah, we had subjects, we didn’t mess around and have just a little of this and the other.” She recommenced on the curriculum “We had ah English, and, and we had math and we had science, and we had history and ah those were the main subjects and, and a foreign language. We had a foreign language but in the high school that I went to, they just offered Latin.” She said she had one year of Latin grammar and composition and one year of Caesar. Recalling the curriculum she explained, “Caesar, yeah and that’s the only two years they offered this in Latin. And that was the extent . . . of our program. Well, of course, now the girls had, of course home economics classes and ah and the boys well, later in high school could take home economics with the girls, yeah.”

Later, during her last years at Holston, Elizabeth gave the details for transportation to school, “there was a primitive homemade type of bus with long benches that delivered students to Holston, but well after my brother and I got older, we got a car and my brother drove the car and took, took my sister and I, and my cousin and someone else in the car, they drove with us.”

Elizabeth reported that all socioeconomic classes of children attended school. In fact, her father, expected his tenant farmers to send their children to school, "It was an understanding he had with them, [and it] was [for their children] to go to school." Additionally, when Lee Gammon, "hired a man on the farm he instructed them to start with 'you are not to curse.'" According to Elizabeth, Gammon paid some of the tenant farmers by the day and others gave Gammon a percentage (usually 50%) of the crops that were grown on Gammon's property. The tenant farmers were Caucasian, and Elizabeth did not recall them being from other countries or speaking with accents. She emphasized that she was not certain of the details or the manner that farm business occurred:

I don't know what it was. I can't tell you. Of course he furnished all of the machinery and the land too. Yeah, I don't know what part that he paid. But some of them, but some of them didn't want to do that. He paid them by the day. Yeah.

Additionally, Lee Gammon earned a living by "buying cattle and fattening them and then selling them in the fall" and raising crops and selling them:

He usually took them to Jonesborough. That was the big you know, and he would go and buy horses. He would go and buy mules and or horses and sometimes he would bring the horses home and keep them a while and take them back and maybe some of the, I guess they got kind of, people didn't have feed you know and I guess they were poor like and he would buy cattle in the winter, in the early spring, that were not fat and he had to put grass and everything to turn them about, then they well be big and fat that fall. He would make a lot of money on them. And ah, of course he sold an awful lot of corn and wheat and millet.

Gammon supplied his tenant farmers with oxen and mules and successfully took timber from land and either farmed the land or re-sold it as reported by Elizabeth:

He [Gammon] had 20 mules. Ah, he had five farmers and he figured ah, he figured five, ah four mules to a farmer. Well, he had oxen, he had oxen too. Ah, when he bought a piece of land and he cut the trees off and sold the trees, made a lot of money that way, and he would take the oxen and the oxen would start on the mule and you put the yoke around the oxen and the oxen would pull that wood out and daddy would clear the whole thing then he would farm it later.

When asked about growing tobacco, Elizabeth exclaimed that they did not grow tobacco “way back then” they grew “wheat and corn and millet and of course then he had as I said five farmers, he had to grow a lot of potatoes for them all. He had to grow a lot of all, but now each farmer though had his own garden, his own garden but daddy grew quite a few potatoes. In fact daddy grew a lot of potatoes because he sold excess potatoes.” She continued:

He took them [the potatoes] to Bristol, yeah, aha ...he took them to a store. He took them to a store, yeah. He had a man in Bristol that took a lot of his ah like ah- - fruit and excess things. Of course we had all kinds of blackberries ...raspberries and blueberries, strawberries, and everything. And ah the man’s name was Godsey, Mr. Godsey. He lived; he had a store in Bristol on State Street, where, close to the train station, yeah, and the train station is still there.

At home the family gathered after dinner and “we would all sit around the fire and talk and we would pop popcorn and eat it, and we [would] roast chestnuts and eat them, and we played checkers . . . and, we just, well, some of the older children though would have a lot of school work and some of them would go to the kitchen, to a big long table” and the older children would sit on “a big long bench out there and, and we would sit at that table to do lessons, the older ones would, and the young ones would [sic] kind of gather together in the living room, in the what we called the sitting room.”

Elizabeth shared one of the 20’ by 20’ bedrooms with her sisters. She described the appearance of her childhood bedroom:

we painted our walls different colors and, I think if I remember correctly, yeah I do remember correctly, that our bedroom because I remember the closet doors were painted blue. Seems like they were a darker blue and the walls, and of course we had curtains. We had shades, shades that pulled up and down, and we had a lot of the curtains were kind of silky, not silky, lace like, just you know, solid lace and of course we had a rug on the floor.

The rugs for the house must have been a symbol of culture with woven rugs in the family areas of the house and woolen rugs in the formal areas. Elizabeth commented on the rugs and the practice of piecing rugs:

But a lot of the rugs were woven rugs. We, we saved all of our rags and everything and, and our mother or someone would cut them in strips and make them into a roll, roll them in a roll and then we would take those different kinds. But sometimes they would dye, just maybe take some parts of a sheet and they dyed maybe purple or blue or, or whatever, pink, and then we would make those rolls because I could remember having to roll them.

Over 75 years later, Elizabeth recollected the practice of taking the fabric to the weaver for the rugs to be woven and then for her mother to take them home and sew the pieces together:

Ah, take those rolls of different colors, there was a lady, Ms. Harriet Hall, that had a great big a six foot loom, we called it a loom that wove rugs, you know, and we took those rags, those balls of, of material and she would weave rugs, six feet wide, and then ah, I don't, mother, I think she did, I don't know how she would fasten them together, then she would take she would take like a six foot wide ... and six wide and as long as she wanted it and then she would sew it together.

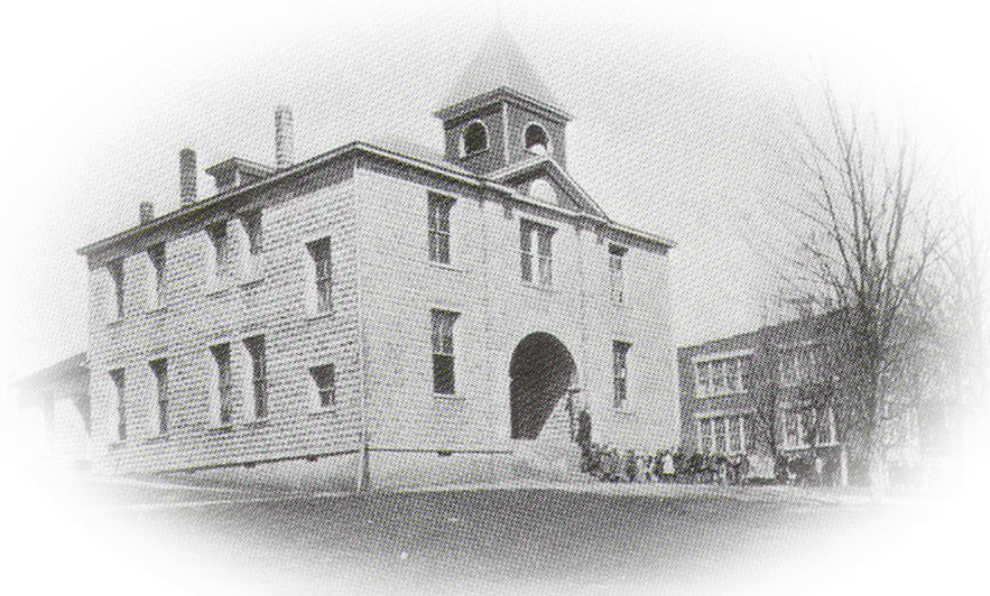
These pieced rag rugs were for use in informal areas of the home. Elizabeth continued:

Now, that was a rug that was used on the kitchen floor and seems like in the sitting room. But in our parlor, our dining room and our reception hall, and our halls, our big hall had wool rugs and the two name brands, I remember was Wilson, Wilson something and Mo, it was Mohawk, I believe and they had bright flowers, maybe red flowers, all the rugs were, they were bright colored, yeah. And we had that kind in the dining room and what we called the parlor, and the reception hall which was like a den, ah, the wool rugs. And on the guest bedroom upstairs, we would still have that woven rug that we bought, that was Mohawk or Wilson or whatever. And then in the halls, I remember we had long narrow rugs, in the hall, spread. The hall was big and long, maybe we would have maybe two or three rugs that was about 30 inches wide, something like that, and maybe about 54 inches long and all of the Mohawk's or Wilson's that was in our hall. This was downstairs. The steps didn't --- I don't think they had any rugs on them.

As a child, Elizabeth and her siblings, Preston and Sam, (the others children were older) played Hide and Seek and Ring-Around-The-Rosey. Elizabeth revealed her favorite hiding place in her house:

We had a [place] where the steps went upstairs, our steps went up ... and then they, they turned to the right and then we had another one, so anyway, we had a vacant space under the steps which mother used for a closet. But this was before that closet there was sort of a little hall there. Not too big, about 4 by 4 but it was tall and ah, she had a curtain across in front of it and I would hide in there.

Elizabeth reported that she enjoyed playing outside except for the honey bees, “Well, we played, we had a very big yard, big yard and we had honey bees. But you had to play, we never played near the honey bees because we were afraid we would get stung. And we played catch ball, or we played just you know, we had such a big yard, well, we had a place out in the middle that we played just regular baseball.” Figure 23 presents a photograph of an older concrete block Holston Institute School building that was built in 1911. The newer building that was built in 1922 is in the background of the photograph.



*Figure 23.* A Photograph of the Holston Institute School Building Built In 1911 (Barnes 1985).

Elizabeth and her older brothers and sisters rode to school in a buggy pulled by horses or on horseback. Elizabeth remembers, “It was six or eight miles to Holston and when it was raining, we rode in a buggy with a top. My father paid a fee to people that lived nearby the school and they took care of our horses while we were in school. The man, where we kept our horses, helped the girls off their horses, unbridled and unsaddled the horse, and fed it during the day.”

In 1913, the Gammons bought the first car in the community. Elizabeth believes that the car was a Hudson and that her father purchased it in Bristol, TN. However, “the roads were just rock roads, rock roads” and she went on to say that when it rained or the weather was bad, the road conditions made car travel challenging. She often mentioned the danger of car travel due to flat tires and stated that traveling just the distance to Blountville approximately 6 miles often resulted in at least one flat tire per trip. She recalled that “The car was big and long. The top lay down –like a sports car does now—and it had four seats. There were three pedals and you had to feed the gas, it was difficult to drive.”

A few years later, her father or her older brother drove her, her sister, and her cousin to school. Once when she was in the sixth or seventh grade, her brother was sick and couldn’t go to school which led to her driving the car for the first time. She told the story of her first experience driving a car:

Sam or Daddy always drove...you didn’t need a driver’s license back then...when you learned to drive, you just drove. I went and got in the car. I thought that Daddy was going to come out and drive us to school. I waited a few minutes, then, I called out to him, ‘Daddy, we’re going to be late, if you don’t hurry and take us to school.’ He replied, ‘If you’ve been riding to school with your brother these last two years and you can’t drive by now, you can walk.’ I thought that he was teasing, but he wasn’t.

And so I thought, well, if you said I could, I, of course I have always ridden . . . along in the front seat with my brother and so I started it and we had about three miles to drive and I was scared to death, was scared, I just shook. I was so scared. But anyway I got



there just fine. When I got to the school we usually went around the edges, [because] the school was kind of in a three corner thing and we always went around the edges and came up the hill and parked up at the backside and walked right straight in, but I didn't know whether I, I didn't feel like I could get up that hill with that car. So on the lower side it was level, it was level right in front of the school so I just pulled in on the level part and parked, and I was shaking all over. But anyway I got there and of course no one had any driver's license....

She was pleased to add that although her brother Sam drove most of the time during her high school years, he graduated a year prior to her graduation, so Elizabeth drove the car everyday during her senior year of high school.

Although a popular media and literary-generated stereotyped view of Appalachian people in the early 1900s is that they lived in isolation, the Gammon family history contradicts this stereotypical view. The people of Sullivan County frequently used trains for transportation. For example, when one of Elizabeth's uncles, Steve Barnes, was seriously injured from a fall out of his barn, Elizabeth's father took him on the train to Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland, for major surgery. The injury was serious, but a doctor, who was a relative of the family, determined that Barnes needed travel to receive life-saving treatment. Elizabeth contended, "Dr. Joe Bachman was one of the best doctors in Bristol and he and Daddy were good friends. He used to come and hunt with daddy all the time. And he was related to Uncle Steve's wife. She was a Bachman and Joe Bachman was her first cousin and he told daddy what all to do and how to take care of, of Uncle Steve [during the train trip]." Barnes recovered from the surgery but walked with a limp for the rest of his life.

Another relative, Eva Clegg, from Iowa became ill while visiting in 1913 and Gammon escorted her back to Iowa on the train as recalled by Elizabeth:

Then daddy, she was so poorly [seriously ill] and daddy later, got on the train and went with her to, to go back to Iowa. Yeah. She wasn't able to go by herself. Daddy took her, yeah. How did, poor daddy, get all his money to do all these things? Of course, it cost money to go, on the train.

In the early years of her life Elizabeth's family caught the train in Bristol, VA or Jonesborough, TN. When she was a teenager, there was a train that ran from Fordtown, TN, near Miller – Perry Elementary School. Elizabeth told that “the train always came in there at morning and went toward Kingsport and then came back in the evening. Now, the locomotive, you have heard me tell about that, the locomotive, which was electrical.” She said that they “caught the train at Fordtown to go like to Kingsport or to – I don't think we could catch the train to Jonesborough. Ah, no, couldn't catch the train to Jonesborough.” But later when she was older in the early 1920s, she caught the train to visit her sister for a few days at a time because she could get off at the “Hemlock” station near her sister, Ava's home in what is now Colonial Heights. The train was greatly preferred because the rural roads were often rutted, muddy, and difficult to drive on and there were few bridges.

As transportation improved women were influenced by national trends in clothing. When Elizabeth was very young she wore long dresses, but the styles changed in the early 1920s and she wanted to dress in style:

Of course when I was little, little I wore dresses, long, you know, long. Even the boys, the little boys wore dresses until they were maybe three or four years old, yeah. And people never cut their hair. Oh, my brothers always had such pretty hair. All in my family had curly hair, pretty hair except one. Her hair was straight but I can remember seeing pictures of, the boys with long dresses on and they had long curly hair . . . And back then of course until I guess maybe, -- of course after I got in high school or ... about in the 20s, the 20s, you know, they started wearing these real short dresses, but my mother never allowed me to wear too short a dress. It was always down below my knees, but that was short for her. So and you wore dresses that had flounces on them, I remember, and they will be straight with the flounces at the bottom. That was high style at one time.

Figure 24 presents a photograph of Elizabeth wearing a dress that she described as “high style” for the 1920s. This was a photograph of Elizabeth that her future husband, Paris, carried in his wallet for years.



*Figure 24. A Photograph of Elizabeth in the 1920s.*

The clothes that she wore during the cold winters were designed for home life and travel without the convenience of modern heating:

Well, yes see ah, homes weren't heated like they are today and homes were just kept warm with fireplaces and through the winter months you wore long leg underwear with long sleeves in it and it was – the girls' was cut, just cut all together, you know. And ah, you wore those and then to school you wore long stockings and they were heavy stockings. And you wore shoes that laced up your leg; you know, laced or had a hook. Anyway, I can't remember wearing boots, but [I wore] shoes that were laced high.

We wore those and of course you always, in the winter time, wore a woolen scarf and a woolen hood because you, when you back then at that time early, you didn't have cars [with heat] – the cars had no heater in them whatsoever. The only heat that we had would be to heat a brick and then ride with it and put it to your feet in the car or to light a lantern and put a lantern in the car and of course you put a lap robe over you. The cars didn't have glass windows, like they do now, [they] had so large windows, and you had one for each side of, now you had the front, the front shield, the front shield was glass, and of course you didn't have any, any windshield wipers either. You had a wiper that had a little hand to it. You had to work it with your hand . . .

As Elizabeth recalled her early life, she commented that they used to live where they considered to be “out in the country.” She stated that electricity did not come to the Fordtown community “until later, well, even later, we didn’t get electricity in the county until – up in the 30s.” When the TVA built dams and brought electricity to the area, they built huge power towers criss-crossing the Pendleton’s farmland. The dynamiting damaged the Pendleton’s new home, but there was not an effective recourse for the Pendleton’s as they were pleased to be provided with electricity. Elizabeth explained:

Well, no one in the county had electricity, just no one at all. They had it in the city, and I don’t, I guess I don’t know when they started having it in the city. Anyway, Jonesborough [Tennessee] had it because I remember going to Jonesborough and my Uncle Bob Thomas had electricity but we didn’t. The country people didn’t have but later though in about oh, ah well I don’t know how, several, quite a little bit. Well, in about 19 and 20 somewhere, 26 and 7, somewhere in about 25 or 26 my father got a propane gas thing that you dug a hole and you put the tank down and you [placed] the propane gas in there and added water and that made gas we had real pretty bright lights in the house by gas. And, we had iron by gas and had a stove, a small stove, of course mother had a –we had a big stove besides [the small gas stove], because she had a lot of cooking to put [in the stoves]. It was a three eye stove, a gas stove.

She further explained that the other stove was a wood-burning stove that you had to put wood into as they did not burn coal. She gave the details on bringing in the firewood and then stacking it for the evening:

My brother and I brought the wood in and father would, oh would have I don’t know how many hundred feet, for the winter, of, of wood already stacked up because we had, we had ever so many fireplaces and even the cook stove and then, but at that time in like the kitchen and in the what we called the sitting room and the downstairs bedroom and some downstairs bedrooms, we had fireplaces and we had to keep carrying wood and then in the what we called the parlor then, now we call it our living [room].

And --- Oh yeah, my brother and I, that was part of our job. You had to carry in the wood out of that big long cord of wood [from the backyard area] and my brother and I had a big sleigh and we would put [the] wood on the sleigh, you could put, it was a big long sleigh, and we had some big dogs, great big dogs, - I forgot what kind they were. Anyway, we had harnesses for them and we would, we trained them to, to wear those harnesses and pull that sleigh. They pulled the sleigh of, the load of wood on the sleigh. Sometimes the

dogs wouldn't do what we wanted them to do. But anyway that we worked, that was one of our jobs in the afternoon, was to, to get the wood in.

Respect and dignity in the community was important to Elizabeth's family and it was instilled in her to lead a sophisticated life with music in the parlor – and the type of stove that a family had in their parlor reflected their “dignity.” She continued:

[In] the parlor and the dining room you used stoves and these stoves had a lot of nickel all around them that they shined you know and it wasn't very dignified or aristocratic or whatever you wanna say to have a fireplace in your parlor. You had a decorated stove in the parlor and the dining room. . .

Well, now we didn't always burn [wood in the parlor stove] at night. When the girls had to practice piano at night, you know, you know to [practice before] going to school the next morning, we built a fire in the parlor because the piano was in the parlor, but ordinarily we didn't [keep the parlor stove burning], but we kept the fireplaces [in the other rooms] going. Yeah.

The Gammon family was well-prepared for cold weather and they worked out plans to keep the house comfortable for the family:

Well you banked the fire at night. You banked it. You kind of threw ashes up on it and then (coughing) you always brought in at night some kindling and some wood, then you stirred the ashes off of that and then put the kindling on, well, maybe sometimes you would lower a piece of paper under it or start it or something, you know, light a piece of paper and start it.

Anyway, but as you would think, you know the children, we would get up at morning and upstairs in the fireplaces, of course, the downstairs fireplaces they kept in banked and then they would –we wouldn't start the fires until much [later] in the bedrooms upstairs, we just kind of let them go out you know, and, but then you have to start them at night again, then, yeah.

Although World War I took place primarily in Europe during the years 1914-1918, the war had an effect on the Holston community with men leaving to serve in the military and those at home praying for their safety:

We had World War I and, and I was about eight or nine years old. I remember it very well and a lot of my cousins, but there was no one in my family old enough to go to war except my brother George and [he] had a bad eye. Ah, you know, he was cross eyed and he didn't have very good vision and they, I guess they were afraid he would shoot his

own men so they didn't take him in the service but he wanted to go but they wouldn't have him. And but my cousins, my cousins, a lot of them, and a lot, all, all the men in the community that was of age, unless they were disabled [went to serve in the war].

Of course, my father was too old to go. But they [my cousins] went into service and everybody, we, at church we would call them by name and pray for the ones out of our community. That are going, gone to, went, going over to France to fight.

Elizabeth was very young during World War I, but she recalled the shortage of sugar, and she often told of other "hard times" when living on a sustainable farm benefited the family and the community:

The maple syrup, what I am trying to, the maple syrup was made on the farm and the Molasses and the honey, all these, the women had to substitute it, had to substitute them. And the stores, the little country stores, the little country stores will be owned, they would be closed, only be open a few days a week. I think maybe, maybe, well sometimes it was three days and sometimes it maybe be four days because they had the potbellied stoves in these little country stores, and, couldn't put, couldn't very well heat them with wood and they had coal and of course it was during the World War I.

When the men returned to the area after the war, they were often hesitant to speak of their experiences; however, one of Elizabeth's brothers-in-law, George (Doc) Earles, a reserved pharmacist, discussed his experience as a pilot (retold by Elizabeth):

My brother-in-law, was - he helped, he learned to pilot the plane and I remember after he came back he said." Well, they dropped bombs out of these planes. "Ah, he never knew how many people he killed. He dropped the bombs but didn't know, you know, how many [people were killed].

Yeah, and ah, and a lot of the men, of course when they came back from service, you know the World War didn't last, well it lasted a while. Anyway, when they men came back, they told how they would, it rained an awful lot when they first went in [to] France and they had all these trenches dug so they could hide and kind of conceal themselves and how they would lay there and the rain would just pour over them and they lay in those ditches, in the mud and rain, you know.

Elizabeth explained that the war affected her community, "Oh, yes, it affected us. Ah, the stores, ah, didn't stay open very many days because stores used a little bit of coal." People in the community had to go without certain items in order for the resources to go toward the war effort:

Yes, I was eight or nine years old. Yes, I remember. Yeah, I can remember part of it. I remember how I always liked sweet things and I sure remember the sugar part, of course I was little, ah but ah. And, and I remember to the stores, we can only got to buy salt or whatever. Most of the things though were grown on the farm because farmers on my father's farm, we had chickens and we had ducks, and we had turkeys, and we had hogs and beef and all kinds of vegetables grown and all kinds of fruit grown, so but anyway sometimes we would have to go, I can remember that yeah when I was a little girl and the stores would be open some days and we would have to make arrangements to go on, on those days.

Elizabeth always felt that life on a farm was a benefit during the years of war and the Depression and afterward. She described the years after WWI:

Well, right after, right after World War I, ah things had been so held down and everything and then like beginning in the 20s, early 20s like ah 21, 22 and then though the prices got high and father ah, the farmers would raise extra chickens, extra turkeys and ducks and eggs and fruits and things and took it to the country store and, and traded it or sold it if they had excess, which we had a big farm so we did have.

I can remember as a little girl taking baskets of eggs to the store and getting a few things that mother had [wanted] and getting myself some candy.

Elizabeth continued her recollection of the benefits of living on a self-sustaining large farm compared to living on a tenant farm from WWI to the Depression and then to WWII:

So then right after the war, see sugar was so scarce but anyway if you bought sugar it wasn't but five or six cents a pound but right after, after that in the early 20s, it went to 20 cents a pound and things skyrocketed until then. The period in the upper 20s then 29 the Depression started coming, of course some of the big farmers during World War II, the big farmers had a lot of honey bees and they had a lot of maple trees and ah, and a lot of, they could grow a lot of cane, and they produced a lot of honey and molasses and maple syrup but the small farmers had, had families and those families had to, had to leave, and, and my father would divide, he would, he wouldn't try to sell these things that I ever remember of, he would have to, he had five farmers and he had to see that those families had food to eat and he, he would give them molasses and honey and maple syrup.

Although the weather was not suitable for growing sugarcane in the northeast Tennessee mountain area, Elizabeth referred to the growing of cane as sugarcane; however, it was most likely a sorghum cane:

It was sort of a community thing like. Now, all the farmers, we, we made molasses out of cane, cane. We call it sugarcane and ah each farmer grew his cane but we had sort of like

a, a community ah molasses were made in a, first you took the cane and you run the cane through a mill and it took the juice out of the cane then they took that juice from the cane and they put it in a great big long flat ah, ah container, which was metal, metal, if I, metal and then they put a fire on and they cooked it down until it was molasses, took the water out of it. I mean you know, 'til it wasn't a liquid, it thickens.

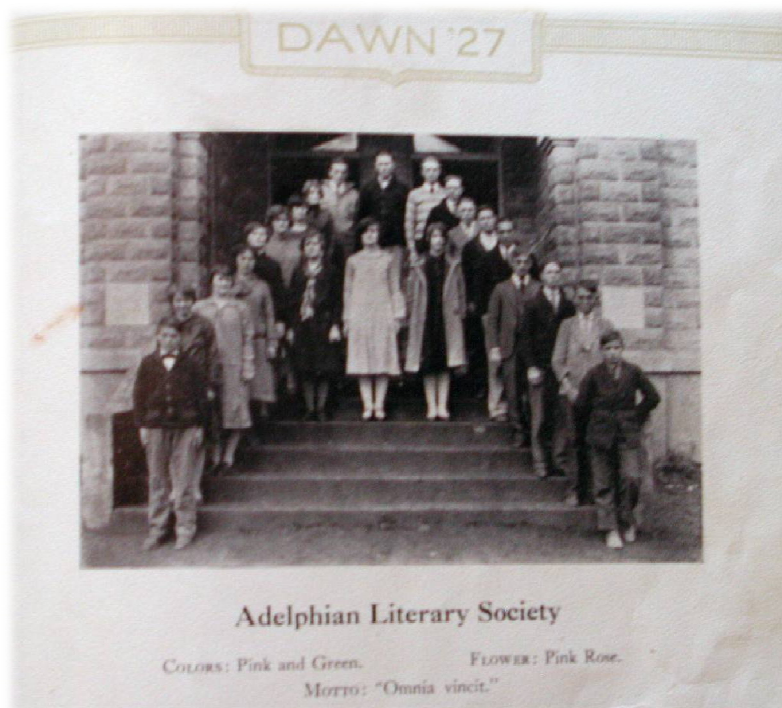
After the war, the style of fashion in the 1920s was for very short skirts, but she says, "my mother insisted that our dresses had to be below our knees...my father loved my long hair, but I had it cut in a "bob' to be in style." This evidence of style indicated that the Gammon family did not live in isolation.

Elizabeth played on the basketball team, playing varsity when she was only an eighth grader. She remembers, "I guess I was good, I played on the varsity team in the big basketball tournament in Johnson City when I was only an eighth grader. I loved basketball. I played guard and I think we won every game my senior year." She was on the school yearbook staff, took piano, and was in the Adelpian Society which was a group of students that debated, recited poetry, and sang songs. Figure 25 presents the Holston Girl's Basketball Team and Figures 26 and 27 present the Adelpian Literary Society during the years that Elizabeth was active in those groups.





*Figure 25.* A Photograph of the Holston Girls' Basketball Team. Elizabeth is the Fourth Girl from the Left (The Dawn, 1927).



*Figure 26.* This Photograph is from the Holston School Yearbook, Dawn, In 1927. Elizabeth is on the Left Side the Sixth Person up the Steps (The Dawn, 1927).



*Figure 27. This Photograph is From the Holston School Yearbook, Dawn In 1928.*

Elizabeth recalled that her mother was always very active as a parent in the school activities and that her mother participated in school events and musical programs. Elizabeth explained that music was “well regarded...very outstanding” and she added that all the children whose parents could afford piano lessons or voice lessons took piano and voice. Elizabeth stated, “We had a piano. My father played the violin very, very well and but if my mother played the piano, it was after she had nine children she was kind of busy and the girls were taking piano and voice and some of the boys then would take voice, and I can’t remember ... [my mother] . . . playing the piano a lot.”

The treasured description of Elizabeth’s mother included:

She was a very, very pretty lady. She had blue like eyes and fair hair and she had a fair complexion – almost baby like and I can remember when she dressed up she looked so pretty... She and my father used to always ah, during the summer sometimes, they would take the train. There would be excursions on the train to maybe Norfolk Beach. Not Norfolk.

Virginia Beach and different places and they would take - that was after my sisters were older and my sisters would look after the younger children. Ah, they would always take

the train and go on a trip during the summer. Ah, wherever it was, maybe it would be different places, you know. And I always remember – I can remember about buying her clothes and I can remember seeing her trying them on after she got home with them to see how they looked. And I remember how pretty she looked in them and she ---- ah she had a lot of company, we had a lot of company and of course and it was a big family. Ah, her sister died and she took her sister's son and he lived with us until he got married.

A description that reflected her mother's everyday work included the number of people that they fed each day and the variety of food her mother served at each meal:

Ed Deck was her nephew and mother of course had - that made eight children, and then she herself and daddy made 10 ... it was quite a job to prepare three big meals a day. Back then it wasn't like it is now. You got up every morning and you had a great big long table for 10 people and you would have like cereal and you would have maybe fried ham, fried sausage, or fried bacon, and you would have big hot biscuits and fried apples and fried potatoes and jelly.

In a later interview, Elizabeth added more descriptive details about the breakfast meals her mother prepared in the Gammon kitchen:

For breakfast she always had ham, fried ham. She'd have sausage or bacon, one of them, two kinds of meat. She'd have gravy. She would have hot biscuits, every morning, yeah hot biscuits and of course scramble eggs and well, maybe some poached eggs, maybe two different kinds of eggs. Some ate one. And we would have oatmeal and, and cream of wheat. But Daddy had his own cream of wheat crushed at the flour mill down here, little mill that was down there, yeah. . .

Daddy said the blessing. You didn't eat a bite until he said the blessing. . .

Whoever was the youngest child he always kept right by [Daddy]- he ate up here at this end [of the table] but there were eight [children] down there. He always – there was a high chair – I don't know where that high chair is now– he always kept it right beside of him, you know, yeah.

A photograph of Elizabeth's mother, Betty Barnes Gammon and Elizabeth's older brothers, George and Robert Lee, is presented in Figure 28. This may have been the occasion of Robert Lee's Christening Ceremony.



*Figure 28.* This is a Photograph of Betty Gammon with Two Eldest Sons, George and Robert Lee.

With a family of 10 to prepare for and a 13 room farmhouse, Elizabeth's mother had help from the wife of a tenant farmer. Elizabeth recalled one helper in particular:

Aunt Mary Robinson. She'd be here early at morning and stayed until the dishes were washed and put away. But mother wouldn't let her cook. I mean she'd peel the potatoes and peel the apples and peel the squash and peel things and wash up and keep clean but mother didn't let her cook. But she stayed until the dishes were washed at night, put in the cupboard, yeah.

Yeah, Daddy had five different farmers and mother always had a special woman that came. Sometimes she would have two that came and helped some. She always did all the cooking but the helpers would like wash the dishes, clean the floor and scrub the porches, and do things like that because you didn't have linoleum ... floor at that time. You used to have wood floor and then you had braided rugs on like all the kitchen and stuff and of course the other part of the house rugs that looked like oriental rugs – we say oriental now. But she [mother] always did the main cooking ...put the things [food items] on, season them, and tend to them.

The daily experience for a female in the early 1900s included cooking the meals, washing clothes, sewing clothes, and tending to children. Elizabeth reported that her mother was always prepared to serve her own family and other guests who might be working on the farm or visiting:

Ah, back then mother would have - some of the farmers – she would have to [prepare] lunch too and ah the big breakfast of course was just for the family but for the what we call lunch [now was called dinner] then . . . you had two kinds of meat for lunch and three or four vegetables, and dessert and everything. A big meal because well, back then people came along and you know [would] drop in for dinner and mother never knew [in advance] that she would have two or three [additional guests] for dinner. We called it dinner, dinner, and we call dinner at night – there was supper, but she always cooked a big meal for dinner, not lunch, I said lunch a while ago, dinner and then she always cooked enough for dinner to have supper at night and supper at night was a little lighter meal. Well, it was plenty heavy, we still had everything left from dinner, but anyway, we always had plenty of food.

We grew food, we grew our own hogs and of course our own beef and our own chicken, turkeys, and ducks and everything like that. And then we grew a great big garden with all kinds of vegetables in it and we had all kinds of fruits: pears and apples and plums and blackberries and raspberries and blueberries and, and ah all kinds of fruit of different kinds. We grew, you know, we had it on the farm.

In Elizabeth's early years most people wore handmade clothes and it was the responsibility of the females in the house to make clothes and sew for the family. In the Gammon family, Elizabeth recalled that her grandmother had had to weave material for her family, but that when she was born there was ready-made fabric available and "store bought" clothing available. The maiden aunt [Aunt Mettie] and Elizabeth's grandmother assisted Elizabeth's mother with the sewing for the large family:

Well, mother sewed. Yes, she sewed. Although Aunt Mettie lived with us for such a long time and Aunt Mettie sewed real well. And then grandmother, my father's mother, lived to be up in the 90s and she was a very, very fine seamstress and, of course, when back when my grandmother's children, my father, they would have to weave his things and then make his suits, cut his suits, and make his pants and things. But then later of course we could buy material already, already you know woven and Aunt Mettie sewed real well and so did grandmother and of course and mother helped, mother helped too. Yes. But we – most of our clothes, well, of course, our coats and some of our fine clothes were bought in Bristol. Yes.

Elizabeth's mother, aunt, and grandmother made their own underclothes and petticoats which she described as being ". . .very, very fancy. They had knitted lace on and they would knit real little

fine lace and put like at the bottom and then they would put a ruffle and the lace on there. They were, as the saying goes, floozy, even the petticoats.”

When questioned about purchasing store-bought clothing in Bristol, Tennessee, the largest nearby town prior to Kingsport, Tennessee, being incorporated in the 1920s, Elizabeth explained:

We went to Bristol. There was no Kingsport. No, no stores. There was no such place as Kingsport stores when I was a little bitty girl.

King’s Store was one of the oldest and it was the best class store. No, they had a Taylor’s. There was the Jewish man that was Taylor ... Taylor was his last name and Taylor was the name of his [business] – ah he carried fine man’s clothes.

Even in this rural mountain area, there were other ethnic groups as Elizabeth included in her interview that Mr. Taylor, who owned the shop in Bristol was Jewish and that they “traded an awful lot with him” mostly purchasing “suits and things.”

When Elizabeth was a young girl, she loved horses and ridding was a favorite pastime:

I really loved horses and I would get up, one of my horses’ name was Pearl. Ah she, she was a female horse and ah she was ah real, real gentle, but back then you know, we rode our horses an awful lot and then, ah the roads then out in the country were rock and they kind of you know, you had to keep your horses shoed. Well, Pearl that my horse didn’t like to be shoed and but I had to take her and had the shoe put on and there was a blacksmith oh just oh not too far away. He was a Ford. He was a brother to Tennessee Ernie’s ah grandfather and ah Uncle Jim everybody called him. He wasn’t colored but everybody called him Uncle Jim. He was real, real fat. Oh, when he was [sic] hot, the perspiration just rolled off of him.

And Pearl, my horse didn’t like her, her, didn’t like to be shoed. She didn’t like her shoes, you know, changed, taken off and nailed and new ones nailed back on because they wore. And ah so, she would try to bite Uncle Jim while he was down bent over trying to shoe her and ah he would get mad and, and then I would have to go and hold her real tight. She wouldn’t bite me but she would bite at him on his behind. And it would make him so mad, of course I don’t blame him, but anyway I would have to hold her all the time that Uncle Jim was shoeing her.

But Pearl was, she was a real gentle horse. Now she didn’t, she didn’t travel very fast but then I had another horse that was called Bird and that was a male horse, ah I believe it was a male horse, yeah and, and anyway no it wasn’t. It was female, Bird and Bird



though could, oh she could, she could, we called, the reason we called her bird was because she could, she could run so fast. She could run ah, on rock road. If the road was a little bit muddy, she could run faster than the car could, ah you know, ah, ah because she could run so fast and we would get out on the field.

I would run her with my cousin. My cousin liked to ride too, Ruby Barnes, who married a Duncan, Ruby Barnes Duncan. And she, her, her horse was never were very good at ah, at.,ours were trained horses kind of. Ah but anyway, I would start racing with, with her and my horse, especially if I was riding Bird, would just out run. We raced and I could get there a long time before she did, yeah.

And then, but one time then, my sister and I, we would ride on Sunday afternoon, and one time we went riding. My sister and I did, and she was real, she was younger, and ah it was always said that the horses were afraid of snakes, and it was in the winter time, we were riding out this narrow road and all of a sudden the horses gave a little snicker and they whirled and started, we presumed, we think there was a snake. They started flying back to the barn and my sister was really, real, real young. I was four years older than she was and when she got to the barn the horse was, made a curve to turn into the barn and, and threw her off and hit her head against the barn door, and it kind of made her sick. But she got over it, but ah anyway, my father thought we were racing but we were really weren't racing, the horses just saw something that scared them and they whirled and they took off flying. A lot of my time, and I would ride and go to the store and I would ride and go to school and I would ride and go just a lot of places. I loved horses.

When asked about the Gammon family Christmas holidays, Elizabeth mainly recalled receiving oranges or fresh fruit that was not available during the winter months. But during an interview she did recall one very special present:

Well, one I can remember was that, at that time in 1918 dolls, one of the favorite dolls was the Red Cross doll with a cap like the Red Cross wears, and they were, I guess, kind of expensive. Not many [children in her community] got them [for Christmas], but I got one for Christmas and I, I thought that was wonderful, wonderful. I can remember that, yeah.

In 1925, when Elizabeth was 14 years old, she experienced a tragic event. Her mother became suddenly, seriously ill. Even nearly 50 years later, Elizabeth's voice grew quiet as she told of her mother's illness and suffering, "Well, she had a kidney what they called Bright's disease then and there was no cure for her. The doctor told us she had the Bright's disease. And we lived in the country, but father had doctors in Bristol that were outstanding and there was

nothing that could be done for my mother.” Elizabeth remembered that her mother was sick only for a few weeks and that she felt great sorrow “I was just sad. I wasn’t angry at God. I was just sad, yeah. . . I was in the room when she died, all the family was. . . I don’t remember saying goodbye. She was too much in a coma to have said goodbye to us.”

Her mother came down with a terrible headache and a painful backache. They sent immediately for the best doctor in the area. Unfortunately, there was nothing that he could do for her. Bright’s disease is a disease of the kidneys and at that time, there was not any cure for her illness. Sadly, for Elizabeth, the other children, and her husband, Betty went into a coma and died in a few weeks at the age of 51. Elizabeth remembers her grandmother Barnes, Betty’s elderly mother’s grief along with her father’s sorrow, “Oh, he was sad. He was hurt. We were all hurt and my mother, my grandmother, her mother was so sad. I remember that she said to me, ‘I wish God had taken me in place of Betty,’ which was my mother’s name.”

They took her mother’s body to the funeral home and embalmed her and then brought the body back to the house the evening prior to the funeral. Elizabeth said of the funeral customs, “the custom was to have a wake at the home the night before the funeral...people brought in food and stayed up all night. It was right after Christmas and I was really hurt. The regular preacher on the circuit came and preached her funeral. She was buried in the Wheeler Chapel Cemetery.”

Her mother’s death was extremely difficult for Elizabeth...she was grief stricken. An older sister, Mary Eva, helped to manage the house until she and her husband moved about eight miles away to Blountville. Then, Elizabeth had to assume the household duties and take care of her younger sister, Preston. By this time, Aunt Mettie was elderly, but she tried to help too. Elizabeth’s father said that no woman would ever take the place of his beloved, Betty, and even



though he lived almost forty more years and dated several women, he never remarried. He passed away at age 97 in 1961.

Elizabeth grew especially close to her brother, Sam, and her cousin, Ruby Duncan. Elizabeth and her friends had picnics, went to ballgames, and went to the swimming hole on the river for fun. Her father was very strict and she was never allowed to go on a date unescorted. Fortunately, her brother, Sam, was only two years older and she often went with Sam and his friends.

Elizabeth and Ruby Duncan were always very active with school, sports, and other activities. Elizabeth remembers in the 1910s going to the Chautauqua in Blountville. The Chautauqua was a traveling show that came to Sullivan County every year. Elizabeth, her friends, and family all enjoyed attending. The Chautauqua presented a weeklong event at the center of the county in the Blountville School. They came from New York and entertained rural audiences with musicians, dancers, magicians, scientific inventors (with new products), lecturers (on topics of health, finance, and fashion), and exotic style entertainers (Hawaiian dancers or Tahitians) and other interesting entertainment. Elizabeth says that each year in October, the schools let out so that the students could attend and that families went together at night. She thinks it may have cost \$1 to attend. This event brought the “outside” world to the rural mountainous areas—it was educational and entertaining.

Elizabeth attended Holston High School and enjoyed playing on the basketball team. She stated:

Well, I graduated from Holston High School in 19 and 28, and I had been there four years . . . I had enjoyed it all, except maybe the first ah freshman year. My mother had died that year and ah I was kind of unhappy. Ah my older sister kept house at the home and I went on to school but it took me some little time to adjust to the death of my mother.

But otherwise Holston was a joy. [O]ne of my outstanding athletic events [sic] was basketball. I even played basketball in middle school and I was extremely good because we, the high school had a tournament which was in Johnson City where ah, ah the University is and my school Holston and all of the county schools, even in Holston, even in Sullivan County and Washington County and Hawkins County ah came to this tournament. It was quite, quite a large thing, it lasted about a week. But I was in grade school but ah back ah back then you could play even if, with the high school, even if you were in the grade school

Even as an eighth grader, Elizabeth played on the Holston High School Varsity team and she played in a tournament in Johnson City, “when I went as a part of Holston High School team to Johnson City for the tournament.” She enthusiastically told that she was on a team that played well and won tournaments “Yes, yes, we, we ah we did real well. Now it was just the ladies’ team.” She explained that she was talking about the girl’s team because the boys’ basketball team was at a separate tournament. Although she added that the boys’ basketball team was very supportive of the girl’s team “Well, the boys’ basketball team was, they were interested in how it went and they would come and of course, yeah of course, and give us support.” The team received support from other local teams when they played games outside Sullivan County, “And of course other, Sullivan County teams kind of supported each other; I mean you know, because we were playing, we wanted Sullivan County to be the outstanding leader, so we supported each other.” At the time between 1924-1928 Holston High School was one of “four high schools in Sullivan County. And we played these other ah, all four of them. And we played usually Elizabethton High School, and Johnson City High School, Kingsport High School and ah sometimes Erwin High School, which was in Unicoi County. Some of those were out of Sullivan County.” Then she added that they also played Bristol High School. She stated that basketball was the most popular sport at Holston. Figure 29 presents the Holston School letter that Elizabeth earned while she was a student at Holston Institute.



*Figure 29. A Photograph of Elizabeth's School Letter From Holston Institute.*

Another favorite day at Holston was Field Day:

The field day and at the field day we would have sack races. We would have baseball throws and we would have softball throws, ah we would have all kinds of races, running races and ah it was an out, outdoor thing, usually lasted a day and it was a lot of fun, a lot of fun. There were other things that were in that field day but right now I can't quite remember – what the others were but a number of things. It lasted a day.

She recalled that “Well, we had homework every night, yes, in a lot, ah our, subjects and, and it required a good length of time” to complete the assignments. She announced that she had made good grades overall, but “I didn't make very good grades in, in Math but I always passed. My father told me ‘you have to; I don't want to hear any failing in school.’ And, and my brother [Sam] was good in math and he, he helped me in Math in high school and then in college.”

When asked about schools in the early 1900s and teaching school through the years of depression and war, Elizabeth reported:

In 19 and 14 the county only had the money to pay for teachers to have school to teach school just seven months a year at this time and then even later then when I started teaching in the late 30s which was when Sullivan County [had] trouble to collect taxes – even [struggled] to pay the teachers their salary. That back then and in the late 39s in the grade school the schools only had school 8 months a year unless you were in the grade school [combined] with the high school and the parents had to transport the children to the same school –the grade children could stay the extra month –the county only paid for

eight months but the parents would then pay for the ninth month and they stayed until school closed the last of May then. Of course, [in the] later years ah five or six years after – later in the 30s in the beginning of the 40s in the early 40s then the county could collect taxes better and had more money then than they had before then [and] the county school started operating for all children for 9 months out of the year.

In Sullivan County, Holston was viewed as a progressive school and Elizabeth was pleased to report that Holston had, “Now then we had literary societies and these societies usually had a program all, all the high schools together usually on Fridays and we would have debates, and we would have some maybe would read poems.” She remembered that one person in her class “was so very, very bashful that he couldn’t make a speech or be a part of debates. So we, he, he was in my class and we would insist that he read a poem, which he did and then did very well and later developed speaking . . . skills.” She said that later, “he went on and became a minister.”

Concerning her academic experience at Holston she explained:

Yes, yeah, we had subjects, we didn’t mess around and have just a little of this and the other. We had English, and we had math and we had science, and we had history and those were the main subjects and a foreign language. We had a foreign language but in high school that I went to [Holston], they just offered Latin, Latin, Latin. That was all they offered.

Elizabeth wrote a theme (essay) paper a week in some of her courses at Holston. The family has a box of the papers that she wrote in high school and college that include science, economic, home economics, and history. The English themes included such topics as *Jane Eyre* and Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, and “Using Proper English.” Other topics concerned the need for a good education and work ethic. Included with her school work was a Robin Red Breast Composition Book that was filled with mottos that the high school students had chosen as his or her own and presented in Figure 30. Each student had chosen five wise sayings, quotes, or slogans to

represent his or her moral character, personality or outlook on life. Figure 31 presents photographs of her handwritten schoolwork.

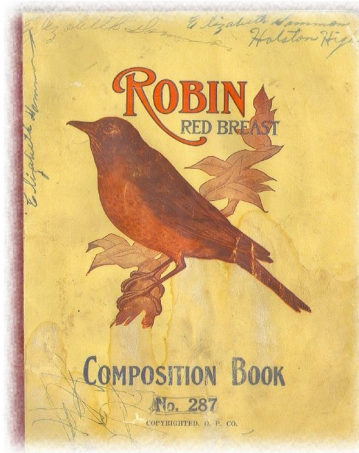


Figure 30. A Photograph of Elizabeth's Robin Red Breast Composition Book

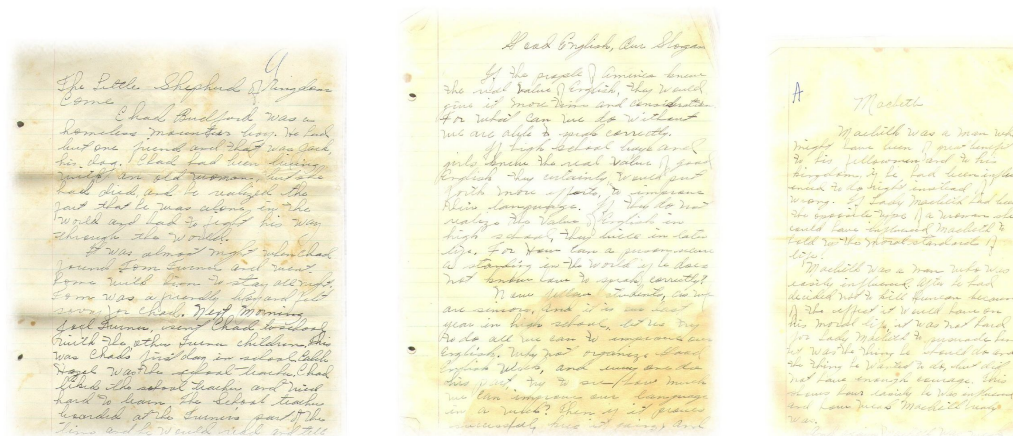


Figure 31. Photographs of Papers That Elizabeth Wrote in High School at Holston Institute.

According to her graduation certificate, she had one year of Latin grammar and composition and the next year of Caesar. She seemed to contemplate her academic experience at Holston, and then she added, “Caesar, yeah and that’s the only two years they offered . . . in Latin. And that was the extent of their, of our program. Well, of course, now the girls had, of

course, home economics classes and the boys well, later in high school could take home economics with the girls, yeah.” Elizabeth’s Holston Institute graduation photograph is featured in Figure 32 and her diploma from Holston Institute is featured in Figure 33.



*Figure 32. A Photograph of the Holston Institute High School Graduating Class in 1928. Elizabeth is on the Front Row the Third Person from the Left (The Dawn, 1928).*



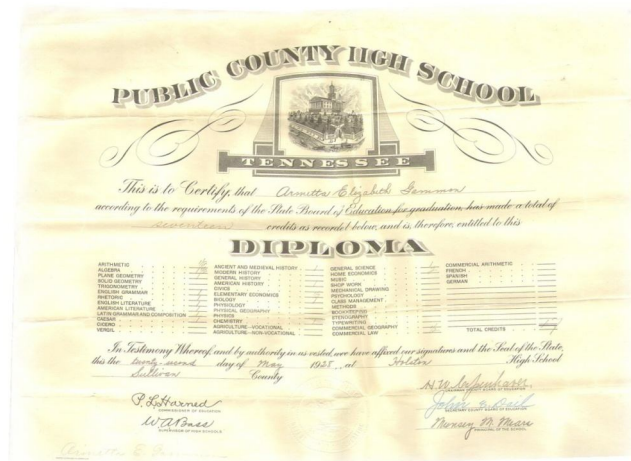


Figure 33. A Photograph of the Graduation Diploma of Elizabeth Gammon Presented to Her In 1928.

In the Gammon family, the girls were apparently more studious than the boys, Elizabeth explained, “Well the girls did better, made better grades than the boys because the boys had to help a great deal with the farming. And ah they, they you know had so many errands, farm errands to do.” More than once during the interviews, Elizabeth spoke of the formal education of three of the four girls in her family, attending college, “Mary Eva the second [sic] oldest in the family, and she was the second oldest daughter in the family and she went on to college and, and received a concert diploma in voice and piano.”

Contrary to the stereotypical view of rural mountain Appalachian families like country music legends, Dolly Parton’s family or Loretta Lynn’s family, who lived in poverty and isolation, the Gammon family was very progressive and evidently remained fairly current with urban areas. Mr. Gammon put in a bathroom in the 1910s. He had a large water tank up on the side of the house and the commode flushed with gravity power. The Gammons put in a propane gas system in the 1910s. This allowed them to have gas lanterns, a small gas oven, and a gas iron.

They heard the “news of the day” when they went home from school and they enjoyed time with their family. She reported, “We had a radio when I was in high school.” She said that in the evenings she remembered, “Aunt Mary Eva always washed the dishes and put everything away after supper and we would go to the parlor, what we called the parlor. Daddy played violin or the girls would play the piano.” Elizabeth rarely ever played a piano possibly because she had very large hands. She wore a size 10 ring and the first and second knuckles of her middle finger were stiff and permanently swollen due to a childhood injury. She had studied piano while she was at Holston, but she was more pleased to tell people that her sisters, Mary Eva and Ava, both had degrees in piano and Mary Eva had a degree in voice too. She said of Mary Eva, “She went to . . . Martha Washington College . . . in Abingdon, [Virginia].” Both of Elizabeth’s sisters, Ava and Mary Eva, “they went to Maryville College one year” and their experience seemed to impress Elizabeth as she was proud to discuss their talent and degrees.



## CHAPTER 9

### COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE: THE ELM TREE YEARS

Sarah Faust, a classmate, introduced Elizabeth to a young man from the Holly Springs community of northeast Tennessee when she was a sophomore in high school. The handsome, athletic young man was Paris Pendleton. He immediately liked Elizabeth and they began courting. Usually, they double dated with Ernest Faust, Sarah's brother, or Sam, Elizabeth's brother and his date. The Pendleton family was well respected in Sullivan County. Their family had the first recorded deed in Sullivan County—the Pendleton Land Grant that included 4,000 acres along the banks of the Reedy Creek near Kingsport. Paris's father was a Baptist preacher and a farmer. Paris (1906-1983) was one of eight children born to Laura Mead and Robert Pendleton. Figure 34 presents a photograph of a youthful Paris Pendleton.



*Figure 34. A Casual Photograph of A Young Paris Pendleton.*

The courtship of Paris Pendleton and Elizabeth Gammon began in 1926 and led to their marriage in 1930. After Elizabeth passed away, the family opened a briefcase and found their

hand-written love letters to each other during their courtship. Given that a) they lived miles apart over rocky, winding roads, b) they did not attend the same high school, c) after high school Elizabeth moved 100 miles from home to attend college in Madisonville, Tennessee, and d) their limited access to telephones and long-distance dialing, the love letters formed their long-distance interaction. There were 31 letters from Paris to Elizabeth and 23 letters from Elizabeth to Paris that were neatly preserved. A photograph of the love letters is presented in Figure 35.



*Figure 35. A Photograph of the Love Letters That Elizabeth and Paris Wrote to Each Other While They Were Courting and Secretly Married.*

The letters revealed a relationship that commenced as an adolescent attractional love expressing their desire to discover places to go to spend time with each other joking, picnicking, and attending school ballgames. Because Elizabeth was not allowed to have dates, they arranged group outings to see each other. Paris's friend, Earnest Faust dated Elizabeth's first cousin, Ruby Barnes, and Elizabeth's brother, Sam and his dates formed the usual group. Others in the group of teenagers included Elizabeth's cousin, Steve Lacy, and Paris's cousin, Sara Faust. In the

letters Paris and Elizabeth affectionately refer to each other in the salutations as “my sweetheart, my dearest one, and my darling.” The letters include remarks concerning their physical health, their various activities, and apologies for their informal stationary, late-night “messy” handwriting, and for not writing each other more often.

One of the letters Elizabeth wrote to Paris dated July 14, 1928, described a group of friends going frog hunting and then enjoying a meal of delicious frog legs. Another letter from Elizabeth to Paris reported an enlightened horseback ride and the desire for a moonlight picnic with a teasing remark from a friend concerning a possible marriage between Paris and Elizabeth. Following the teasing remark about marriage, Elizabeth wrote that marriage was most serious and required an assurance that a couple was truly in love.

The letters from Paris to Elizabeth concerned plans to see each other on the weekends and assurances that he intended to be faithful to Elizabeth. A letter dated March 1927 included a desire for Elizabeth’s love, “I wish that you loved me and I would be the happiest man on earth.” Paris usually dated his letters and signed his name, but Elizabeth rarely dated her letters or signed her name. They both closed their letters with similar romantic lines including: “lovingly,” “with loads of love,” “with oceans of love,” “always yours,” and “always only yours.”

After graduation from high school in 1928, Elizabeth wanted to attend East Tennessee State Teachers College in Johnson City, Tennessee, so that she could be close to Paris. But, her father insisted that she go to Hiwassee College (a Methodist school) in Madisonville, Tennessee, with her brother Sam. She explained, “they offered a good ministerial course and so my brother was going. So, my father said, ‘well you have to go with your brother.’ Well now, we just had one car of course, you know to take with us so we, I decided then I’d just go. I had, I had no choice really. And I didn’t particularly wanna go but I learned to love it and I played basketball

at Hiwassee.” She was proud that Hiwassee had a successful team, “We won, we were a good team, really a good team, yeah. And in the end . . . while I was at Hiwassee, I . . . they considered me a good player and I won a [school] letter.”

She clarified her decision concerning college:

I really wanted to go to state teacher’s college [later known as East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, TN that was located 15 miles from her home] to go to college but my brother was, wanted to be a minister and Hiwassee College was a Methodist school, and they offered a good ministerial course and so my brother was going [there].

So, my father said, well you have to go with your brother. Well now, we just had one car of course, you know to take with us so we, I decided then I’d just go. I had, I had no choice really.

So, at her father’s insistence that girls needed an education, Elizabeth went to Hiwassee, but Elizabeth said that “two of my [older] brothers they liked farming and other things” did not attend college. The older brothers graduated from high school but not college. However, Elizabeth illuminated the fact that her older sisters attended college, “And my oldest sister went to college and . . . my second sister received a piano concert diploma and a voice concert diploma.” Elizabeth’s younger sister, Preston, was the only one of the four daughters who did not graduate from college.

Elizabeth gave some of the details concerning traveling with her brother, Sam, to college “And my brother had a car, and, of course, Hiwassee was quite a long distance [away], but we would drive home like for Easter and Thanksgiving, and, of course, Christmas and . . . some other times for various reasons.” Her brother, Sam “had bought his own car, yes. It was a Dodge with a rumble seat.” Elizabeth explained that she was not expected to work, “My father furnished me. I didn’t have any job. My father furnished it. Now the boys worked and made a lot of their own money.”

As a member of the basketball team at Hiwassee, Elizabeth was pleased to mention that “I made the Varsity team and played and I played as guard and we, in my senior year, we didn’t lose a single game. And we had several scheduled games with other colleges.” She remembered playing Tennessee Wesleyan from Athens, Tennessee, and Emory and Henry, “but it seems like it came a big snow and it was cancelled the last time.” She reminisced, “we practiced six days a week. We had to practice on Saturday. And we had a nice new gym, which was kindly unusual for a small college.” She lettered in basketball for the years she played at Hiwassee. Figure 36 is a photograph of Elizabeth and a basketball teammate at Hiwassee College in 1929 or 1930, and Figure 37 is a page from Elizabeth’s Hiwassee College Yearbook, *The Pretty Fawn*, depicting the men’s and women’s basketball teams signed by her college friends.



*Figure 36.* A Photograph of Elizabeth (On the Right) and a Basketball Teammate at Hiwassee College from the Hiwassee Yearbook, the *Pretty Fawn*.



that was real good . . . but I had ah a psychology class – ah we laughed and said he was real, real smart and he talked kindly above our heads all the time.”

Although her degree is in education, she said that, “I didn’t want to be a teacher. I said I will never be a teacher. I’ll never be a teacher and I don’t know why I took and I got a permanent teacher’s certificate. But I don’t know why, I just didn’t, didn’t think.” The degree in education required her to do practice teaching, “We had to practice teaching. I taught a history class, American History class in college. That was part of my practice teaching.”

However, once she was away from home, she became extremely homesick and unhappy. She wrote to Paris that she was “lonesome and blue” for the first few months and insisted that she was miserable living in the dorm away from home. Her letters indicated that her heart was with Paris and her goal to be a teacher was secondary.

Even though she felt that she did not want to be a school teacher, she entered Hiwassee in the fall of 1928. Her attitude reflected the gender issues that limited the employment of women during the 1920s:

Well, at that time girls didn’t work in factories and things like they do now. Ah, most of the girls, they either taught music piano or voice, or they taught school and I had taken piano and voice but I wasn’t ah, it wasn’t one of my outstanding things. So really there was nothing much left for me to do except to teach school.

The stock market crash in 1929 affected most of the nation and Elizabeth’s father lost his cash money when the banks closed; therefore, he did not have the cash to pay Elizabeth’s tuition for the spring of 1930. She discussed the situation,

Until after Christmas in 19 and 30, and we had, our school had quarters [a system of terms for grading and payment of tuition]. We had quarters and he had paid for the second quarter, but the third quarter my brother and I were both in college, and we borrowed money to pay because - well, our father, of course, went on the note because he had a lot of property. But the bank had closed and all his money was in the bank, [and he] lost it.

So my brother and I started out to find out how we could manage for ourselves. So I, my father of course had a good financial report and so did other members of my family, so I went to the bank and I borrowed money enough to finish my [final year of college and], graduate that year [1930].

When asked about her father's attitude concerning losing his money, she responded, "Well, I am sure he was disgusted, but he just went to work. He had a big farm. He went to work and started earning some more. He had a lot of farmers living with him and the farmers worked the [land], for they received a third of the crop for that was part of their pay."

Elizabeth explained that she decided to borrow the money for her final semester in college from The Farmer's Bank in Kingsport because it was an "open" bank – the others were closed. She could not recall the details on the bank note except that the bank officials knew "my father and one of my brother-in-laws had so much property that we didn't have any, any trouble borrowing the money." Then she added that she and her brother, "Sam paid it [the bank note] back ourselves."

Concerning the stock market crash and her father's loss of money in general, Elizabeth stated her concern and her father's resilience and history with Confederate money, "Well, I was upset, very, very badly. Of course, my father had experienced [having] no money at the close of the Civil War when the Confederate money that they had was of no value. So it wasn't a new thing to him."

At Hiwassee, Elizabeth did not like living in a dormitory, so she moved into a private home with the Allens who also boarded other college girls. The Allens were nice people and they observed the same curfews and restrictions as the college. She was happier at the Allen's home and completed the first year of college. In several letters to Paris, she attempted to persuade him to join her at Hiwassee and she insisted that he could get his teaching certificate in 3 months and that both of them could be teachers.



When Elizabeth came home for the summer, she and Paris went to dances, weenie roasts, made homemade ice cream, and enjoyed being together. Elizabeth went back to Hiwassee in the fall and then after Christmas for the spring quarter. With the stock market crash and the loss of her father's cash, it was a difficult time, but she adopted her father's attitude. For the rest of her life, she told of her father's attitude toward money as being if you had any sense or in her father's words "get up," you could make money. She explained in her words

...we had started college in 28 and this was 1930 [1929] when the banks closed. So we all had to get our heads together and of course our father though seemed to be not too depressed because he felt like money was not the most important thing in life. He felt like if you, you know, he always said if you had any sense or if you had any management and any 'get up' that you have, you can make some money.

During these months, the love letters that Elizabeth and Paris were mostly personal expressions of affection toward each other and accountings of their activities; however, during the era of the stock market crash in 1929, Paris wrote a few indirect responses that may have been references to the state of the economy or may have simply been his financial situation. He explained to Elizabeth that "under the current economic situation, it might be five to ten years before we could get married." Elizabeth contended in a response letter that she did not "want to wait ten years until financial circumstances improved" and she expressed optimism that they would work and support themselves. They saw each other when Elizabeth came home or when Paris could get transportation to Madisonville. The letters during this time became more serious with reference to their future and included lyrics to the songs they listened to on Bristol, Tennessee's W.O.P. I, the first radio station in northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia, or on the Victrola: "My Blue Heaven," "Somebody's Lonesome," and "It's A Million To One, You're In Love." Other songs noted in their letters were "A Night In June" and "My Blue Ridge Mountain Home." Figures 38 and 39 are photographs taken during this era of Elizabeth's life.



*Figure 38.* A Photograph of Elizabeth and Paris.



*Figure 39.* A Photograph of Elizabeth and Her Friends.

Although illiteracy was a problem in the Appalachian mountains, and the stereotypical view was that there was a lack of opportunities for education, most of Elizabeth's close friends and cousins attended college, "Oh, about all of my friends, good friends went to college. Several of them were my cousins: Steve Lacy, and Tom [Lacy] and Mabel and, and Sara Deck and John and all those [close cousins]."

After graduation in 1930, Elizabeth was not eager to teach school. She recounted:

Well, I said I wasn't gonna to teach school and I didn't want to teach school. When I graduated from college I said I am never gonna teach school and never again to walk in a school door, and so then my friends said oh yes you want to, you want to. And I said no I don't want to.

I had heard ah the teachers and all talk about how difficult it was to do the register at the end of the year. I said no, but oh, they said, we, some of them, had already taught some, they said we are happy, you just go [apply for the job and teach].

And, my best friend [Gladys Avery] boarded with the superintendent of schools, and she called me and said oh yes now, our superintendent said they have a school in Kingsport and my brother had gotten a school in Kingsport and he was gonna teach that year, for a while, and so then she talked me into it.

When asked if she was motivated or influenced by other friends and relatives who attended college, she responded, “Well, Mabel Lacy and Aunt Bertha [Bertha Barnes Cross, her mother’s youngest sister], all in the family went to college. She went to – I believe King College. I think she went to King College. I believe that’s right. Aunt Mary Eva went to Virginia Intermont . . . The Lacys all went to college.” Then she described a family that did not go to college, her cousins who lived next door, “Now the Decks, ah, the Decks didn’t go to college. Well, their father died and I guess they didn’t have the money, back ah in the – in the 18s and ah -- ah the Depression there, ah people just didn’t have the money. I suspect that was really a part of it.” Then, she spoke of another relative, her mother’s brother, Steve Barnes. She stated, “Uncle Steve went to college. He taught school at Emory and Henry, oh Steve did . . . I would say he went to Emory and Henry College. He taught there. But that’s a guess.” She added, his daughter, Ruby Barnes, who was Elizabeth’s cousin and best friend growing up, attended Maryville College.

The first year Elizabeth taught at Highland Park in Kingsport. She commented on her experience, “I taught the sixth grade. I taught all the subjects, yeah. All the subjects and some of them [it] used to be you could just go to start school whenever you wanted to. If you didn’t want to start until you were nine or ten, you could [sic], and I had some boys in my room that were almost as old as I was.” She taught 2 years at Highland Park School. She said that she did well getting along with her students, “I got on okay. They said those old big boys I don’t what you would do with them. Some of the teachers who had had them before said they will just do

anything and I don't know what you will do." However, she conveyed her recollection as positive, "But I never did [have any trouble with discipline]. The first time I walked down the hall they gave me the [wolf whistle] ... but anyway I got along just fine with them."

Sam and Elizabeth both began jobs teaching school back in Sullivan County. The pay was \$85 per month, which was excellent for the depression years. Elizabeth proudly stated that "\$85 a month" and "that was a big salary." Sam and Elizabeth used their salaries to pay back the loan for their college education. Plus, they had cash, so they paid the property taxes on their family farm. Lee Gammon continued to work his farm and they had plenty to eat even though they did not have any cash money for a while. Elizabeth felt that life on the farm protected her family from the hardship of the depression. She explained the circumstances:

Well, my older sisters and all the rest of them had graduated from college and they were married and we all lived on the farm. I mean we all had farm land and we had food of our own. I mean for our family, and, of course, my father did a lot of farming and so he tried to help his neighbors by letting them have corn to be crushed for corn meal and wheat to be crushed for cream of wheat and dark biscuits and bread and he would share garden, and vegetables with his family down the street. And he would, he killed animals to eat and he shared some of his meat with his neighbors down the street. People could not get a job. [It] wasn't that people [were] just was trying to get welfare because there was no welfare whatsoever at that time, and it was just up to the neighbors that had farmland and that had food to try to help their neighbors to keep them from starving.

Elizabeth continued to teach sixth grade at Highland School near Kingsport and she coached the middle school girls' basketball team. She recalled that it was the fall of 1930 and that "times were still bad." Her basketball team played a few local games but did not have busses to travel to play other schools. As stated earlier, she used her income to pay back the bank note from her college loan and she and her brother, Sam, paid the property taxes on their father's land.

The Gammon family was active in the community and they participated in the school programs and politics. Elizabeth expressed her attitude toward women voting and was thrilled about her first voting experience in 1932 that she remembers vividly:

. . . you had to be 21 then to vote, yeah. Women didn't take too much, usually it was – politics was mostly a men's world, and women didn't take too much to understand it, and I imagine that the women that did go and vote were women that ah, whose husbands were very interested in politics and pushed the women to go and vote. And it used to be, when we went to vote, you didn't vote on the machine – you voted on a piece of paper, and . . . you had to be, as long as I can remember, you had to be registered. You had to be registered to vote in a certain county. And, and, and you wrote your vote on a piece of paper.

The first time that Elizabeth voted it was, “at Holston Institute and ah, ---- I believe it was in 19 and 31 or two. Let's see I would have been 21 during 30. Ah, I know I voted in 32 and . . . [I voted for] Jim Newman. [He] was the Democratic candidate for sheriff, [and I} voted for him” in “a county election.” As an independent person, Elizabeth strongly felt the need to vote for the person of her choice. The Gammon family had the reputation of being determined Democrats, but the Pendleton family were resolute Republicans. Elizabeth declared, “I didn't vote straight [Democrat or Republican], I didn't, I voted for some Democrats, for some Republicans. But, my family always voted for Democrats.”

Years later a nephew of Elizabeth's, Whit Cross, recalled that the Gammon family was deeply rooted in southern politics and Lee Gammon disapproved of suitors if their families were Republican, and that it was a while before they approved of her future husband, Paris:

Grandpa Gammon didn't approve of Aunt Elizabeth's boyfriend, who at that time was Allen Cooper and he didn't approve of Uncle Paris because back, you know people grandpa's age, they were kind of bitter against Democrats and Republicans.

And so Aunt Elizabeth used to come up to mother's house and Uncle Paris would come there and then they would stay there for a while and then they would go for a movie or something and then come back. Aunt Elizabeth would ask mother, if I could come in a little while and when I went – first time I went in there Uncle Paris gave me a stick of

chewing gum and after that every time they came, I would come in and when Uncle Paris gave me a stick of chewing gum I would leave.

Anyway, ah Grandpa later thought Uncle Paris was a fine son-in-law but before they were married they came to our house a lot.

Whit further explained that Lee Gammon's father had operated the commissary for the Confederate army, and that the memories from the Civil war lasted well into the 1900s. Whit told that that "if you asked Lee Gammon what happened at Bluff City they would tell you the Republicans party at Bluff City was the Union army."

Elizabeth and Paris eloped in December 1930 and were married in Johnson City by a minister who Paris knew. Elizabeth returned to her home and Paris to his home keeping their marriage a secret. They did not tell her father immediately because he was "high-tempered" and had been extremely upset when both of Elizabeth's older sisters were married. Elizabeth explained the reason that she did not want a formal wedding and she retold the elopement, "I didn't want it to be a big wedding because I knew daddy didn't want me to get married and he'd always got so mad when Ava and Mary Eva got married . . . If I had not been 21 my father wouldn't have allowed me to have gotten married." She added that her sisters, Ava and Mary Eva, and her brother, Sam, knew it, "But I didn't want to tell daddy until later." Elizabeth did not disclose who finally told her father the news of their marriage, or how he responded.

Prior to their elopement, Paris had been working at Producer Refineries Oil Company in Bristol and then after that, he thought he had a job at the Kingsport Press, a book manufacturer. It sponsored a baseball team and Paris was an excellent baseball player and he was asked to apply for a position at the Kingsport Press; however, because the economic times were bad in 1930, the position never materialized, and he went to work at Holston Auto in Kingsport.

During the time of keeping the marriage a secret, Paris boldly wrote to Elizabeth with the salutation “To My Dearest Wife” and the first line in the body of the letter, he wrote, “How do you like that heading—is that alright?” In another letter written on a Sunday night he addressed her with “Dear Wife” followed by a reference to the song “My Blue Heaven” and the words “I can’t begin to tell you how much I love you.”

When they told Mr. Gammon that they were married, Paris moved into the Gammon house and Elizabeth continued the management of the household. Sam married Buena Couch, a fellow student from Hiwassee, the next year. Soon after their marriage, Elizabeth and Paris traveled for a brief vacation to Pennsylvania to visit her brother, Robert Lee, who was working there. Then they went to New York and on to Niagara Falls for a “honeymoon trip.”

Always proud of family heritage, Elizabeth told of Paris’s father, Robert Pendleton, who was a Baptist minister and who was a descendant of the prominent Judge Edmund Pendleton of Virginia. Judge Pendleton was president of the Second Continental Congress, wrote the Declaration of Rights for the Commonwealth of Virginia, was a personal friend and correspondent of George Washington’s, and he apprenticed the young Patrick Henry in his law office. Edmund Pendleton had no children but was particularly close to several nieces and nephews. Elizabeth said that she liked the Pendleton family from their first meeting. Mr. Pendleton died of a heart attack in 1932 and Mrs. Pendleton died in 1948. Elizabeth speculated that she died from the complications of diabetes and a heart ailment. Paris eventually inherited part of the Pendleton land on Reedy Creek; however, he sold his share to his siblings.

Elizabeth continued teaching at Highland Park after her marriage to Paris. She taught there for 2 years until she was pregnant and her baby was due. She explained, “I taught school the day she was supposed to be born, but she wasn’t born until 2 or 3 weeks after that.” Elizabeth

and Paris had a daughter, Shirley Faye, who was born in the Gammon homeplace on March 30, 1932. The road and the community where the house was located has had several names. History books refer to the road that connected Bristol to Jonesborough as the Big Road, Elizabeth's ancestors called it Pinhook, and she referred to it as Minga Store Road. The community was also known as Pinhook and Fordtown. It is interesting to note that Elizabeth and her daughter, Shirley, were *both born in the same house* on what is currently Minga Road in Sullivan County, TN.

One of the most cherished moments in Elizabeth's life was the birth of her only child, Shirley Faye. She described the event, the doctor came to the house, but he had a long way to travel because Dr. Delaney was from Blountville, TN. She recalled that Paris had to help with the delivery, "Well, because Shirley was coming on so fast. I think he [Paris] gave me two cans [of ether] to slow down [the contractions] because the doctor had to come and, and one of my sisters came and [Paris had to help]. He had to have all of this, he had to boil, he had to put all these instruments in and boil them, I mean boiling water." As was the custom, women helped their families with birthing. Elizabeth said that her sister, Mary Eva, came to help with the birth of the baby, and later [another sister] Aunt Ava came to help out because her children were older and, and she came and stayed some. "She [Shirley] weighed 10 pounds, below 10 pounds but the doctor's scale wouldn't weigh the 10 pounds – or presumed." After Shirley's birth, Elizabeth did have help from her Aunt Mettie who lived in the house and her younger sister, Preston, who was in high school and lived at home.

Shirley was a good baby, and both Aunt Mettie and Preston helped Elizabeth care for her, but this was a busy time for Elizabeth because she was the female in charge of the household. In her words, "after then I had to look after Shirley and ah then see, Aunt Mattie lived here and ah



and Daddy, Sam and Preston and Parisy and myself. That was six people and I had to look after the baby and do all the cooking for six people and clean. And – well, I had some help with cleaning the house because I couldn't clean it all by myself.”

She reported that, “She [Shirley] slept and slept.” Shirley was adored by all “. . . there was Daddy, and Aunt Mettie, and Sam, and Preston, and Paris and I, that lived with her and she was the only child there. And then the Deck's spoiled her too: Cousin Florence and Uncle Joe as we called him, next door, and Cousin Sarah when she was not too sickly.” Elizabeth was proud that Shirley had individual attention “Aunt Mattie would teach [and] hold Shirley and she'd say – she had, she had this big Mother Goose Book” and Shirley learned to recite the rhymes, “I forgot how many [Shirley could recite], maybe 15 or 12 Mother Goose rhymes, you know.” An early photograph of Shirley appears in Figure 40.



*Figure 40.* A Photograph of Shirley Faye Pendleton at a Young Age.

As previously described, the Gammon house was usually warm and cozy because the house had modern conveniences like gas heat and running water. Elizabeth said that “Daddy put it in, at some time while I was in high school. I can't remember. . . It was propane.” She added

that they also had a gas stove and a gas iron. The gas ran through the house in a “little tiny pipe” that she described as being about the size of a straw and she commented that they were the only house in the community that had gas installed in their house in the late 1920s. The Gammon house also had a bathroom with running water since 1913, “We had a pump, a pump that pumped the water [from a spring house] into a big tank, concrete tank and then it flowed by gravity back into the house. Further she continued, “he [Lee Gammon] had a big tank up yonder, up there high and then the water would flow in by gravity, you know, yeah. And he had a – the spring – the water was pumped from the spring down there with a pump up here in this thing and then it flowed – it flowed back down because it was so high and there was a thousand gallon tank.” And when asked about modern communication she stated, “Oh, I had a telephone when I was a little girl, ever since I can remember.” Figure 41 presents a modern photograph of the Gammon farm and homeplace. The house remained much the same as it was in the early to mid 1900s, then it was remodeled in 1960s and again in 2007. The Gammon home is currently (2008) owned by Elizabeth’s nephew, Barkley Mills and his wife, Judy.



*Figure 41.* A Photograph of the Gammon House Located On Minga Road in Sullivan County, TN.

During a video interview in 2003 conducted by her grandson, Chris Cate, Elizabeth pointed to the stairway about halfway up the steps in the old section of the Gammon house and she told the following story, “I’d come up here and Mary Eva and Ava and them [her older sisters and brothers] would have company and they would get in there play the Victrola and dance and we had a piano and Ava played the piano and we would sing, and I was supposed to be sent to bed and was supposed to go to bed but I’d come here and sit on that step and I’d try to see what I can see, you know, and I would listen to them sing and laugh and have a good time.”

One of the farms that Elizabeth’s father, Robert Lee Gammon farmed and cut timber from joined the Holston River. On the banks of this river was a place that was a favorite swimming spot for Elizabeth and her friends. A year or so after their marriage, Paris and

Elizabeth went swimming and then sought out a place for a picnic. Elizabeth vividly recalled the event:

Paris and I went on a picnic and we used to go swimming right down from here in the, what we called the “cat-hole.” This was part of the river and we came down and went swimming and brought a picnic, and there was a tree right out here [she pointed to the direction of the tree]. It was a beautiful elm tree. Real nice and round, just kind of like an umbrella and it was so pretty that Paris and I said well this would be a nice place to build a house.

On that ridge that overlooked the river, under the graceful, umbrella-shaped elm tree on the crest of a hill they decided they would like to build their first house.

And, of course, the land all belonged to my father and then we told my father that we would like to build a house, and so he deeded us 5 or 6 - 4, 5 or 6 acres of land and then we started building the house. Now there was an old log house here, 2 story log house here at that time but we tore, tore all of the log house away and the basement, there was already a basement dug. We kept the same basement that had been dug out. Of course it wasn't concrete or anything. We concreted it later.

But anyway we used the same, kept the same basement, and then started building the house here [she gestured to the location], and it took us a year to build it and I think this was back during the Depression era . . .

When we got ready to get the lumber and we got the lumber - the windows and the lumber, all of it at Jonesborough. And the outside is the German-drop siding, which was very, very good ---weather boarding and it – I'll tell this, we [bought] – the lumber, the windows, and stuff and this [the materials for the house] only cost something over \$1,200.

Elizabeth did not want to build a large house like her father had and the economic times were still difficult as the Depression era was ending. So, they built a comfortable six-room house with four bedrooms, a kitchen, and a living room as presented in Figure 42.



*Figure 42.* A Current Photograph of the House That the Pendletons Built In 1935.



## CHAPTER 10

### RIVER VIEW FARM AS YOUNG ADULTS: THE CEDAR TREE YEARS

In 1935, Paris, Elizabeth, and 2-year-old, Shirley, moved into their first home. The farmhouse overlooked a section of the winding, fresh water flowing Holston River, so Paris named the property, The River View Farm, as presented in Figure 43 with approximately 100 acres – 5 acres were deeded when they built the house and Elizabeth inherited the other acreage in the 1960s when Lee Gammon passed away. Elizabeth reminisced on their first night in their new home:

I was thrilled and I remember when I went to bed to sleep that night --the river is just below us and I could hear the river roaring or flowing and. And it sounded so good and it seemed like everything was so quiet and, and you could just almost hear the birds breath, you know, about when dark started to come. And it was – [there was] a lot of trees all the way around. There was a big spring down at the foot of the hill and, of course, the river then down just below us.



*Figure 43.* An Aerial View Photograph of The River View Farm with the White Farmhouse and the Red Barn Located on Pitt Road Overlooking The Holston River. Photograph by Todd Dickson.

Unlike the comfortable Gammon house, they did not have any propane gas, running water, electricity, or telephone service—as power or phone lines were not in the area:

I didn't have any water in the house. We didn't have any way to get water into the house because we didn't have any electricity at that time. So we just had to get water out of the big spring down here. [Sic] We just got a bucket and carried it up, it up to the house, yes . . . Shirley and I would carry the water, and, of course, Paris would carry a good deal sometimes, big, big buckets.

We had a fence all around [the spring] because there were cattle in the field just beside of us and we had a gate. We had to go through that gate and go down to the, to the spring.

When they first moved into the house, Mr. Gammon had given them one cow and they had some chickens and a garden. Elizabeth fondly remembered the early years of her married life on the farm, “Yeah. I milked the cow. And, and we made butter and cottage cheese and butter milk.”

Then, she sadly recalled the death of their first cow:

We called her Blue. And we were very fond of the cow because we got milk, we got butter, we got cottage cheese from the cow. And one time she got in a field of corn and she ate too much corn and she got sick and we had a man to come and look at her and he said there is nothing you can do for her, so she died, and Shirley and I cried, and cried because Blue was special to us. And so, Paris, my husband, said ‘well now you all stop crying that’s just a cow.’ Of course Shirley and I contradicted that, with that. She was our only cow, and I remember Shirley and I were very sad about it.

She further explained that their “spring was about 40 [degrees], it was real cold. We had a spring box. It was a little spring house.” At that time they had an outhouse located on a pathway near their old log barn “[the outhouse was] between our house and the barn. At that time it was just a log barn. We hadn’t built [the new barn yet]; we didn’t build the [new] barn until [19] 48 . . . It was a two-story log, log barn.”

Elizabeth was not employed as a teacher during these years; she stayed at home with her daughter Shirley and often visited with her family at the Gammon house. Paris was employed as a supervisor with the Works Progress Administration (WPA)—and it was a good job to have

at the time. Elizabeth considered Paris' position as a road supervisor at the WPA as important and it provided a sufficient income for their family during difficult economic times. Elizabeth recalled that positions with the WPA were "kindly controlled by politicians and whoever was over it." As many of the other residents in the Holston (Fordtown) community, the Pendleton's farmed as well as worked at regular jobs. Elizabeth and Paris raised cows, hogs, and chickens, and they grew alfalfa grass and corn in addition to having their own vegetable garden. In later years, Paris raised sheep and tobacco on their farm. Figure 44 display a WPA supervisor book that Paris maintained while employed by the WPA.

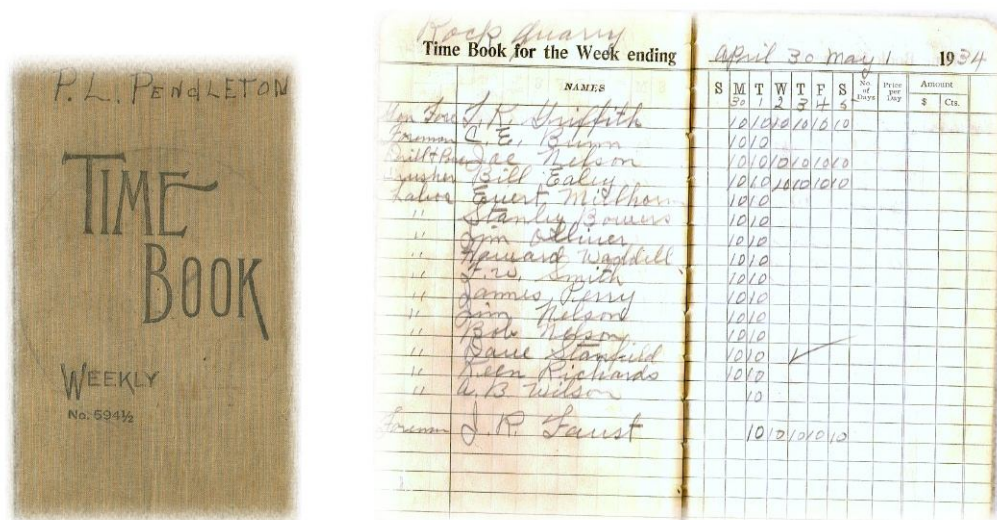


Figure 44. A Photograph of the Timebook That was Used by Paris Pendleton with Work Hours Of Men Under His Supervision in 1934.

Elizabeth recalled, "Shirley was just a toddler, and she said over and over that she wanted to go back to her 'good' house" at the Gammon's. Elizabeth stated that her brother lived through the woods [about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile] from her house, but that she could not see his house. One of his children was a playmate for Shirley, "he had three children, a boy and two girls, and the youngest one was the same age as Shirley and she loved to come down and play with Shirley and



Shirley used to love to go up and play with her.” After several years living in the house at the River View farm, and as economic times improved, Elizabeth and Paris added more livestock. Elizabeth said that she did the cooking and she listed the types of items that she would cook, “we had chickens in a chicken yard up here. We had chicken, we cooked chicken, and we raised some hogs, and we raised cattle and we had pork to eat, [and] we had beef to eat.” She continued enthusiastically, “we had a real big garden, big garden, yeah, aha. I helped with it, but Paris did cultivate it and did most of it, yeah, yeah.”

For their first few Christmas holidays, they did not have electricity and Elizabeth recalled their Christmas trees, “we had a lot of pine trees and cedar trees and my husband went to the woods and cut one and we always had a fresh smelling Christmas tree in the house.” For decorations on the tree, she explained,

you had candles but the candles – there was no electricity to begin with. They had big long -you had a candle that had to be long, [with a] steel arm to it and out here was a candle holder and you put the candles in there. You lit them but you [placed them] far enough out of the cedar trees or you’d set them on fire. But they were real pretty. They [the candle holders] were unusually colored and of course the candles too, but they were very pretty. You would put tinsel on it [the tree] and, of course we didn’t have any electric lights to go on it then, later of course we did, yeah.

For years, they anticipated the availability of electricity to their farmhouse. In 1939, Paris paid for an electric line to be put in several miles in order to have electricity. Paris bought a hot water heater, a stove, a refrigerator, and a water pump months before the electricity lines reached the house. The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) ran electric lines across the Pendleton property and placed several enormous towering power poles across the farm, but the actual electricity that was run to the house was from a local power company, not the TVA. The blasting activity done by the TVA related to building the Boone Lake Dam and the placing the towers across the farm damaged the farmhouse and created land under the power lines that was

protected, so the TVA offered settlement money for damages to the Pendleton Farm in the amount of \$5,000. Elizabeth's brother on the adjoining farm bargained with the TVA and received \$10,000 for loss of his property and damages to his farm.

Finally, when the Pendleton's had electricity, they were able to put in a bathroom and have running water in their house. Their lives changed dramatically when the electric lines were in place, and later it changed again when they acquired phone service:

Yes, very much excited, yeah, and our telephone too. We had to pay for the lines to both [electric and telephone] of them, because no one else even after we put the line and no one else had the money to hook on. And we had to pay for the line. One of our neighbors helped us pay for the line, and we paid for the line ... [which was] about three miles.

Elizabeth recalled that in 1939 she returned to her teaching career due to the need for wartime teachers and bad economic times in Sullivan County:

I think, I have the year, that was, that was when the boys had to go into service for World War II and they didn't have teachers, they didn't have teachers you know and so Uncle Perry [Slaughter, husband of Elizabeth's oldest sister, Ava] was on .... [the Sullivan County] School Board and they needed some teachers . . .

I took Dr. Sam Brown's [teaching position]. He had to go into service and I took his place, and he was teaching math at Miller-Perry, and I didn't like the Math but I stayed there for three weeks [substituting] and then I didn't intend to stay at all. But then they couldn't get anybody [to take over his position as a teacher], so I kept staying.

So then . . . there was another man teacher there and he was teaching—he was teaching history and geography and so he told the principal that he would teach the math if I stayed on, and I could go into his room and teach his geography and history. And so then I went and I still had the same group of children but he taught so many classes in my room, my math [class], and I stayed on [teaching geography and history].

Pay for teachers was at an all time low paying only \$68 per month while jobs in the factories were paying high wages as much as \$200-\$300 per month. During this time, Sam, Elizabeth's brother, became the principal of Miller-Perry Elementary School. Elizabeth's only child, Shirley, was in grade school and attended Miller-Perry so Elizabeth could travel to and from school with Shirley. Further, she stated that she felt that teaching during this time was, "just

like a patriotic duty. And I was just substituting and they kept insisting they couldn't find a teacher and that I take it. So, then finally after I substituted three or four weeks I said well, I will take it." She again clarified that one of the reasons she was hesitant to take the position was because she did not want to teach the math section, "And I said well, I would if it wasn't for the math. So one of the other teachers said, he was teaching math . . . and if I taught his history he would come and teach my math." Figure 45 displays Elizabeth with the other teachers and the principal at Miller Perry Elementary School in Sullivan County.



*Figure 45.* A Photograph of Elizabeth with Teachers and Principal at Miller Perry Elementary School in Sullivan County.

As times began to improve, teachers' pay was raised to \$75 per month for the 8 months of school. Paris and Elizabeth went on short weekend camping trips to the high mountains of North Carolina with other family members. Elizabeth states, "There were only a few hotels,

sometimes there were small cabins for rent in the mountains, so we enjoyed short trips.” She said they packed all their own food –as there were few restaurants and fast food restaurants were not in existence.

As World War II continued, and more men in the county were called to duty, times remained difficult. All across the country, people were allocated stamps in order to purchase gas, sugar, flour, and shoes. The ration stamps were limited and often families needed more stamps than they were allocated. Figure 46 displays gas ration cards from the family archives.



Figure 46. A Photograph of a Basic Mileage Ration Card Distributed By the U.S. Office of Price Administration and Belonging to Elizabeth Pendleton.

During the rationing years, Shirley was young and was growing fast and she quickly outgrew her shoes. Her grandfather Gammon gave Shirley his stamps for shoes. Elizabeth shared her memory of the World War II years:

World War II was an entirely different picture from World War I ... World War II was a very dramatic period of life. It was such a change in life because after the Depression people had gotten on their feet and had money to sort of do things. Then of course World War II came along and at the time of World War II, the government had promoted programs such as WPA which worked a lot of people. But the most depressing thing, I guess we had was we had to be scarce. We had to be particular about how we used our food. For food you had to have stamps for all kinds of canned food and for sugar, for coffee and all your kitchen articles that aided you in your cooking.

If you bought shoes you had to have a stamp to pay for your shoes. And really the coal, coal was the thing that was very much restricted. Even people who had wood coal stoves and several merchants that had the coal-bellied stoves in the country, they were required to stay closed a certain period of time during the week. I forgot the exact time but anyway you couldn't go to the store and buy some days during the week because the store had to close because of the restriction in the consumption of, of coal.

Paris was working at Tennessee Eastman Company when the war started, and because he did not qualify for military service in the war, he was required to work at the Holston Army Ammunition factory (a factory that was run by Tennessee Eastman Company, but was under contract to the Federal government to manufacture ammunition for the military) to help with the war effort. Then later he worked for Sullivan County as Trustee in the local government offices. Elizabeth continued to teach school, but the salary was then a mere \$68 per month. She considered teaching to be her contribution to the community:

I was teaching school partly during that period and the county money was still low and I taught school for \$68 a month, which was just like a charity job, but anyway they couldn't get teachers. We had a hard time getting teachers and if a teacher was sick the other teachers that had a little [free] period ... they tried to fill in because we couldn't get substitutes.

With the limit on car parts, gas and rubber for tires, the teachers carpooled to school. She recalled that the teachers received an allowance for gas and that she and Paris "bought a junky car" that she drove to school. Elizabeth recalled that she could have worked at a plant and more than tripled her salary as her sister-in-law did, but she felt an obligation to teach the children of the county:

I went back to teach in school because . . . I felt like it was more important for the children to have an education [and] because the reason it was important to me [was] that I think that teachers have a wonderful opportunity to provide a good atmosphere . . . [and] attitude toward life. . . And I thought, I think it was very important and so in preference to getting two or three hundred dollars a month I taught for some little time as I said for \$68. . .

And then sometimes [after the depression] they just gave you a due bill for, for your, for your monthly salary, then you had to wait until the county collected the taxes to [cash your check] pay you.

Further, she explained that you could cash your check earlier, but “they discounted certain percent of it to cash it beforehand [the county collected the taxes].” She stated that she liked her work because, “I liked to work with children. That just about covers the whole thing.” Elizabeth is pictured with some of her students in Figure 47 and Figure 48 presents the teachers at Miller Perry Elementary School with Elizabeth’s brother, Sam Gammon, as the principal.



*Figure 47. A Photograph of Elizabeth (Standing Far Right) and the Students in Her Class in 1931.*





*Figure 48.* A Photograph of Teachers and Principal at Miller Perry Elementary School. Elizabeth is Standing in the Back Row Second From the Left and Her Brother, Sam, is the Principal.

During difficult times, Elizabeth felt that Franklin Roosevelt was an extraordinary leader for the country, with help from his wife, Eleanor:

Franklin Roosevelt was -- we give him [credit], although his wife helped him an awful lot. I kind of thought [she] was a great help but Franklin Roosevelt did a lot. He organized the WPA, which was a great thing. Ah because it helped, right after the Depression it helped so many people to get to, to get a job. . .

And to, to get a better way of living, more efficient food and clothing which were the necessities of life and, and that helped them [people of the depression and war] a lot to get on with life.

Reflecting on the depression and war era, Elizabeth considered Eleanor Roosevelt to be:

. . .a great worker and a great organizer and a great assistance to the organizations in United States and I really and truly think if you are asking me, that she was really the background I mean, I think she ah did a lot of the thinking and ... she was a kind person and, and wanted to help civilization to move on into a more profitable and more, it was greater opportunities and all than they had had before.

The radio was Elizabeth's choice of most important inventions in her lifetime. She recalled it as "a great invention because communication is a very important part of, of people's lives. And that was of course a step above the telephone as far as I can remember, I was born in 1909, I, I can't remember my family not having a telephone." The first radios were "run by battery and, and the electricity didn't hold the radio connection. We [were] people out on the farm, there was no electricity, of course, out on the farms." She did recall her family not having a radio, and that when they got a radio, the reception was "quite good." She felt that the radio "had a great impression on not only the United States, but the whole world because it gave us better communication with other continents." The war news was "very important" as they wanted to know what was happening in the war zone.

Shirley was an excellent reader and Elizabeth often spoke of Shirley's relationship with books as having importance in her life. Shirley skipped several grades due to her high level of reading and ability to master her school work, and she was selected Valedictorian of Miller-Perry in the eighth grade. Paris left his job at Holston Defense and for a short time he worked at Tennessee Eastman. He began to sell real estate in downtown Kingsport in the 1940s and Shirley moved to the Kingsport City School System instead of attending Sullivan County Schools. She attended Dobyns-Bennett High School. Figure 49 presents a photograph of the Pendleton family standing in front of their house when Shirley was a student at Dobyns-Bennett.





*Figure 49.* A Photograph of the Pendleton Family in the 1940s.

Later, after the war when Shirley was in still in high school, the Pendleton family began taking traveling vacations. On one of the trips, they traveled with Paris' sister and brother-in-law, Janie Earles and Doc Earles, and their son, Howard, who was a few years older than Shirley. They traveled by car across the United States to California on a southern route and then returned by a northern route. Fifty-two years later, Elizabeth spoke with excitement and amazingly recollected their traveling experiences:

We visited all the states in the United States except Oregon and Washington. Oh well, the first vacation we ever took was in [19] 48. I mean, long vacation. We took a six week vacation and we traveled all the way to California, going on the southern through Oklahoma, southern route. Then we went clear on to Yellowstone, to Mount Cannon, Wyoming and the Black Hills and back down through Illinois and down that way.

She spoke of various trips explaining:

We would take camping trips. Well, maybe we did some after that. But that was before the time of motels and things like that. But ah, at one time we just had to take our own tent and tent outside and then later then we would go to Gatlinburg and to different places and just take, they had little cabins, maybe for just one room. Well, that was true then and Yellowstone National Park too. Just you, we had to stay in little cabins, with just like one room.

Oh yeah, we had vacations at Virginia Beach and ah, ah Daytona, Florida, Bonita Springs, Florida, and Wrightsville Beach, one time and out there from Columbia, South Carolina. It was an old beach [near Charleston]. Oh yeah one time we went to Maine . . . Yeah. Yeah, that was when Shirley was young.

During those years, lengthy home visits were common. Cousins or aunts and uncles would come and visit for a week or two or maybe a month at a time if they had a long distance to travel.

Elizabeth's niece, Lucille Cross Jackson, recalled a visiting at her Aunt Elizabeth's house and the warm hospitality that Elizabeth showed her,

I believe I was in grade school. We would go out to the barn. We were doing something all the time. We were into something all the time and Shirley, your mother, would get up in a tree and sit there and read a book. And me and Libby would get out and go to the barn, we would go out in the field, we would go out in the woods and she is all the time entertaining me something while I was down there. I would stay about a week and she was all the time entertaining [me]. We were doing something constantly all the time.

Instead of playing with Shirley, I would play with your Mother [Elizabeth]. She would entertain anyone. For Shirley then it was - I don't know if I was - I was in grade school then, I don't know how little I was. I have no idea how little I was. I would go down there about every summer and spent at least a week down there. And we were making cakes, making cookies and we were doing something constantly all the time while I was down there. She was entertaining me in some way, doing something. So that, that will be something I will never forget.

For several years, the Pendletons enjoyed taking several brief vacations on the southeastern beaches of Daytona, Wrightsville, and Virginia. Shirley excelled as a student and graduated from high school in 1949 at the age of 16. She enrolled at the University of Kentucky in the fall of that year.

Elizabeth stated that she taught at Miller Perry for “I think 22 years I believe, if I am not mistaken . . . [and] I just wanted to be a teacher. I didn’t want to be principal.” However, Elizabeth decided in the mid-1940s to take classes East Tennessee State College and complete a bachelor’s degree. She explained:

I believe in the summer of 44, the summer. And I took night classes. I was closer to ETSU there from the farm, just over to Johnson City. Then, they had some night classes that, ETSU had some night classes at Kingsport and Dobyys-Bennett High School. I, I can’t remember the years I took; I guess it was in the 40s because I got my degree after you all [twin granddaughters, Paula and Louise were born in 1953] were born.

She attended summer school and night school traveling the 20 mile trip to Johnson City after teaching school all day. When asked why she made the effort to go back to school in middle age, Elizabeth exclaimed, “Oh, I just wanted to get my other degree. . . I had a permanent certificate. I really didn’t have to go back to keep my certificate updated.” She said that if you [teachers] went back to school, you had to pay for it yourself, she believed that she had paid \$12 for each three hours of credit per quarter. However, she did get a raise from the county school board when she added the Bachelor of Science Degree from East Tennessee State Teachers College [now East Tennessee State University] in 1955. A photograph of her diploma is presented in Figure 50.



Figure 50. A Photograph of Elizabeth's Diploma from East Tennessee State College Received In 1955.

Although Elizabeth's position as a school teacher provided a steady and secure income, the pay was relatively low and Paris changed jobs several times, and their finances were often stretched to their limit. Each year when Shirley's college tuition was due, Paris sold some cattle to have the extra money for her tuition. While in college at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, Shirley met Lt. Robert I. (Bob) Ratcliff.

A few months later, Paris and Elizabeth mortgaged the farm to have money to pay for a wedding for Shirley. The wedding between Shirley Pendleton and Second Lieutenant Robert Isaac Ratcliff of Ashland, Kentucky took place on January 26, 1952, at the First Methodist Church in Kingsport, Tennessee. The reception was held at Ridgefields Country Club. Figure 51 is a photograph of Elizabeth and Shirley at the wedding reception.



Figure 51. A Photograph of Elizabeth and Shirley at Shirley's Wedding Reception In 1952.

After their marriage, Shirley and Bob moved to Texas and then to Pismo Beach, California as was required for Bob's military duty. Shirley sent typed letters home to Elizabeth and Paris describing her married life as presented in a photograph in Figure 52.

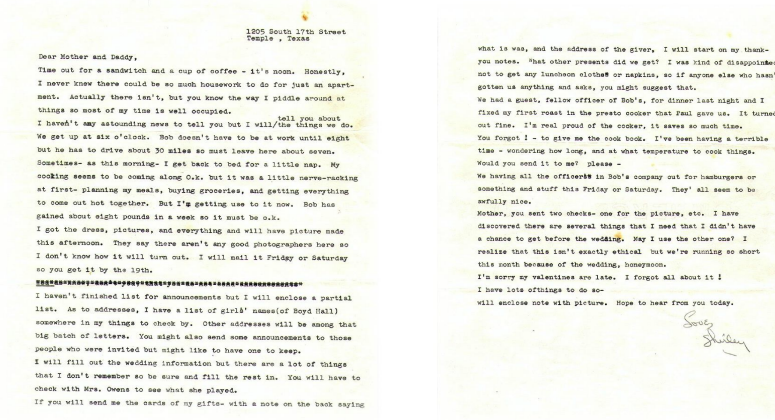


Figure 52. A Copy of a Letter from Shirley to Elizabeth in 1952.

Soon afterward, Shirley wrote that she was pregnant and that there was a possibility of a twin birth. In a letter dated May 15, 1952, and addressed to Shirley, Elizabeth wrote:

We just got your letter. Of course, we will be happy about your having a baby, but with you so far away – we'll just hope that you will be near home and with the news that maybe Bob will get to Virginia. I feel that he will get it [a transfer] so let us hope hard. And about the baby I just felt that maybe you were pregnant for April 12<sup>th</sup> – I dreamed that you were looking for a baby. I am really sorry that you are ill but make the best of it and it won't stay with you long. Take some orange juice or something before you stir around much with something in your tummy you won't get sick. Don't think about it and that will help....

For entertainment during the 1940s and 1950s, the Lee Gammon family clan (uncles, aunts, children, and grandchildren) would often gather for picnics in the mountains, camping and fishing trips, barbeques, and square dances. Elizabeth often spoke of the fun she had at those events. She described one of her favorite events that also presented a cultural historical memory of the Civil War as she included an explanation that the owner of the banquet hall was identified as a black man:

there was an old man that lived near Blountville named Doc Dulaney. His grandmother had been a slave of the Gammons. He owned a large banquet hall and held square dances and parties. (He had separate dances for the colored people.) On special occasions and holidays like Thanksgiving, 4<sup>th</sup> of July, and Valentine's Day, we would go to dances given by Doc Dulaney who was a great cook. He would roast a pig, hire a band with a banjo player, guitar, and fiddle, and lots of people came and we had a big time.

Her niece, Lucille, and nephew, Whit, reminisced about those same family experiences, and adult evenings out:

We would go on the school bus. Uncle George [owned a bus line] took the whole school bus.

Ben Delany, he was, he was Afro-American. Had a place up on the hill where 394 goes across – but anyway Ben Delany had a place up there and Grandpa [Gammon] would hire, and I guess the family, would hire Archie Mann, Willard Gott, and Tom and one more. And then Grandpa would kill something, either a sheep, a steer or a hog or something and Ben Delany he would put it in the ground and barbeque it. And they would go up there and eat barbeque and dance and maybe Uncle Robert Lee and Uncle George and maybe your grandfather, [Paris] and maybe Uncle Ben brought brown bags somehow or another and daddy [Henry Cross]. I don't think the women had brown bags. Anyway and so ah and then some, Aunt Mettie would stay [home] with us [children- all the cousins].

And when they came home they would bring us the barbequed mutton or beef or pork, something like that. Now that's the square dance I suppose she mentioned and I don't – we never went to that.

The 1950s were happy years for Elizabeth and Paris. They had a comfortable life and shared many pleasant days with family and friends. Figure 53 presents a photograph of a party that Paris and Elizabeth had at their home.



*Figure 53.* A Photograph of Family and Friends Gathered at the Home of Elizabeth and Paris for a Party.

Paris was extremely active with the Masonic Lodge serving in several leadership positions and attending meetings every Friday evening. Shirley remembered that “several people joked that Paris was so dedicated to the Masons, that he might go to the lodge meeting instead of attending her wedding rehearsal.” His Masonic Noble membership certificate is presented in Figure 54.

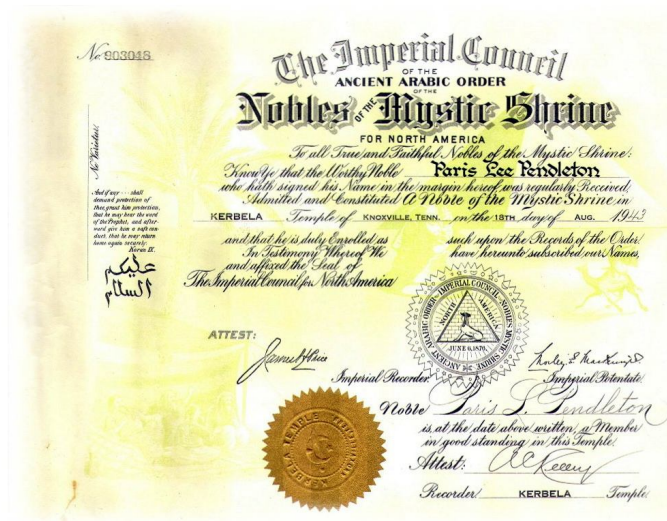
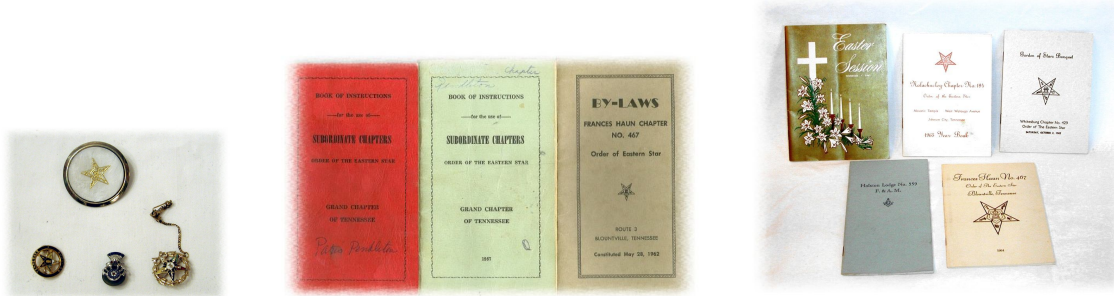


Figure 54. A Photograph of Paris' Pendleton's Membership in the Imperial Council of the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine for North America.

Elizabeth was the founding Worthy Matron of the Frances Haun Chapter # 467 of the Order of the Eastern Star serving with her brother, Sam, who was the founding Worthy Patron. Paris later served as the Worthy Patron of the Order of the Eastern Star. Elizabeth received much recognition for her dedication to the Eastern Star. Figure 55 presents a photograph of the pins that she received, a photograph of some of the books she and Paris used during their association with the Eastern Star, and programs that Elizabeth saved from various Masonic and Eastern Star events. Figure 56 presents a photograph of a few pieces of the rose pink stemware that she received as gifts from members of the Eastern Star for her hours of service. She remained active as an officer in the Eastern Star until she was nearly 90 years old.





*Figure 55. Items Associated with Elizabeth's Participation in Eastern Star Events.*



*Figure 56. A Photograph of the Crystal Stemware That Members of the Eastern Star Presented To Elizabeth as a Gift for Her Years of Service.*

## CHAPTER 11

### MATURE MIDDLE LIFE: THE WALNUT TREE YEARS

Paris and Elizabeth had always wanted more children, but Elizabeth never carried a baby to full term after the birth of Shirley. Therefore, Elizabeth was pleased with the news of Shirley's pregnancy but concerned because Shirley was only 20 years old and living as a military wife in California. In November 1953, prior to the birth of the twins, the Superintendent of Sullivan County Schools, J.C. Akard, granted Elizabeth a temporary leave from her position as a teacher at Miller-Perry Elementary School and she and Paris traveled by car to California. When the girl twins, Paula and Louise, finally arrived on January 3, 1953, Paris and Elizabeth were thrilled except that Shirley had a difficult delivery and they were living in California—too far from Tennessee which was a serious concern for Elizabeth and Paris. As soon as Paris and Elizabeth returned to Tennessee, Paris began a successful political effort to have Bob transferred to an army camp in Georgia. Elizabeth was 42 years old and enjoyed spending time with the twins so Shirley and the twins spent much of their time with Paris and Elizabeth at their River View Farm in Sullivan County. Elizabeth with her twin granddaughters is presented in Figure 57.



*Figure 57.* Elizabeth and Twin Granddaughters in 1953.

After Bob's tour of duty was over, he, Shirley, and the twins returned to Lexington, KY so that he could complete his degree in journalism at the University of Kentucky. Elizabeth and Paris visited them often –and took food from the farm and other necessary items. During this era, the Kentucky Derby was a spectacular event and Elizabeth and Paris managed to purchase tickets annually. They attended the Kentucky Derby without fail for 2 or 3 decades. Paris and Elizabeth eagerly looked forward to The Derby and they made it a social event as presented in Figure 58.



*Figure 58. A Photograph of Elizabeth Entering the Gate at Churchill Downs and Then at Her Box Seat Preparing to Watch the Race.*

In the summers, when Elizabeth was not teaching school, she and Paris enjoyed staying at a small cabin on Boone Lake that Paris built. They often entertained various groups of people on the weekends. They had family events, church events, and hosted other organizations. Most of their time was spent relaxing on the screened porch and gazing across the lake at the natural farmland and forests. Elizabeth continued to have a close relationship with her father, Lee, and other family members. She often told stories about his amazing attitude for adventure and she was proud of his attitude toward life and learning. Shirley recalls that Lee, her granddaddy Gammon, “took a bus trip by himself across the country when he was in his eighties. He traveled just as far as he wanted to go, stopped and spent the night and continued the next day.” She remembered that he “traveled to California and that he always had a book to read.” Shirley believes that he inspired Elizabeth to have an inquiring attitude. She said that Gammon, “even at age 92, he was always eager to learn something new” and she added that he was considering taking up golf when he was in his nineties. Figure 59 presents Elizabeth holding her grandson,

Darby, and her father, Lee in 1957. Figure 60 presents Elizabeth with her grandson, Darby, her daughter, Shirley, her father, Lee, and her sisters, Mary Eva and Ava enjoying a day at the lake.



*Figure 59.* A Photograph of Elizabeth with Her Grandson and Her Father at Their Cabin on the Lake.



*Figure 60.* A Photograph of Elizabeth with Family Members Darby, Shirley, Lee, Mary Eva, and Ava at Boone Lake in Sullivan County.

Elizabeth enjoyed her vacation time, but she remained committed to her teaching profession. In 1959, Elizabeth completed her 22<sup>nd</sup> year of teaching at Miller Perry Elementary School. She had been satisfied as a teacher at Miller Perry, but she developed a problem with her throat and in her words, “Well, I didn’t really leave the classroom because I wanted to. I was having a problem. . . And ah, the state ah, there happened to be an opening with the county, a state ah, well county you call it, supervisor.” The position was officially Attendance Supervisor for Sullivan County, but the position was commonly referred to as Truant Officer. She did not appreciate the term “truant officer.” She described the position, “No, it wasn’t really truancy. I had to take all of the reports from all the schools in the county. I had an assistant . . . During the 20 years that Elizabeth worked as the Attendance Supervisor for Sullivan County, she traveled to the State of Tennessee training sessions in various locations but mainly in Murfreesboro, TN. She described the training, “I had to go for, for schooling. But once a year that was a school, state school, state schooling for supervisors,” and she added, “Yeah, I liked going. Yeah, I guess.”

The majority of her professional responsibility was to be in contact with the principals of the county schools and to respond when there was a problem with the attendance of students at their particular schools. The State of Tennessee had passed a law that children were required to attend school until age 17. She described the situation:

Well, the children [with attendance issues] had a lot of problems, one especially with the girls. Some of the children came from families that didn’t have money. Now the school, the federal government at that time would furnish free lunch for all children – of deprived families... and ah, but many especially the boys and girls in high schools would not ask, they would do without lunch because they didn’t want the other children to know that they were receiving free lunch.

Now the lower grade children didn’t know the difference. Now, many boys and many girls from low income families – stayed out of school, were absent from school, because

the girls, lots of times, because they didn't have clothes or proper [clothes or shoes] that they wanted to wear or shoes.

Elizabeth viewed her supervisory position as both a profession and as a personal mission to help students overcome their hardships and gain an education. Because there was not a working government program or sophisticated system for aid to families in place for the lower socioeconomic levels to receive assistance in the 1950s and early 1960s, and the county public schools system did not have resources to help purchase items such as shoes, clothes, and glasses, Elizabeth contacted local churches and civic organizations, requested help, and she usually gained their financial assistance for the underprivileged students. She expressed her gratitude for the churches and organizations that had helped:

Kingsport - - were very generous in my requests for clothes, shoes, and other necessary commodities that was a big reason for absentee, especially among the little girls, the girls.

The organizations gave me permission to go to the stores and fit the children. One time, but usually these were smaller [children], well not smaller, but one time they had a little big boy that had a real large foot and I couldn't get shoes from any of the stores except Johnny's [Johnny Harrison] Shoe Shop which was an exclusive shoe shop.

I went to Johnny [Harrison] and since he had an exclusive shoe shop he let me have a pair [of shoes] for this boy. They just gave him, well, my [a civic or church] organization paid for them. Yeah.

She explained that numerous times the families did not have clothes or food and organizations gave them food. She mentioned "the Salvation Army. Lots of times there [sic] wasn't food in the family. And the veterans [Veterans of Foreign War organizations] of war were good, and the Salvation Army was good with furnishing food for underprivileged children."

Elizabeth was not required to visit homes or provide transportation for students, but occasionally she did when official help was not accessible, "I really was not required to go to the home – and knock on the doors. I wasn't supposed to ride the children back to school...The law

was supposed to do this.” Nevertheless, Elizabeth managed to get help for the students or she would do it herself:

But many, many times I was unable to get, the sheriffs [officers as they] didn’t have the time to do it maybe on that day, and maybe the children told me that some child, [was] somewhere they shouldn’t be, and I would take it upon myself to go and pick them up. . . And ride them back to school, which was outside the law. And I could go on and on and on to tell you different occasions.

Elizabeth felt that it was important to note and asked to add that “I never called on any of the organizations or a church for assistance that I won’t, that I wasn’t, that I didn’t receive it [the help I was asking for]. Yeah. Of course it took a lot of outside work to do. And sometimes I even got food to take with me to the families.” She praised the organizations that helped and was proud of the community’s response to her request for their help:

Well, they were all was good. At the Moose Club, the Moosettes give big [donations for]... children, underprivileged children. The Shriner’s would once a year at Christmas, any child that wanted shoes could come in and, and they would furnish them with shoes. They would fit them and furnish them. It was outstanding.

Oh yeah, the Lion’s Club helped with glasses. And Mayfair Church . . . Mayfair [Methodist] Church always kept a big wardrobe for girls, which many times I took to the church and I [took girls to the church]. Yeah. And the church would outfit the children [sic] nicely.

Elizabeth requested to add more information to the interview concerning her effort to visit students and talk to parents concerning the importance of school attendance. She spoke in a soft quiet voice, “Any time that I ever went for a child and knocked on the door, I can’t even remember any occasion that I was treated discourtesy. --- Of course I went way beyond what I was I was required to do - and I was happy in doing it.” She felt that the families she visited knew that she sincerely wanted to help them.



When asked about any dangerous situations that she encountered, Elizabeth responded that occasionally there were people with “a gun or [who were] drunk - maybe some of them, yeah.” She added that:

Almost everybody said Long Island [was a dangerous school zone], but I was never treated discourtesy in my life in, in Long Island. I worked there 20 years and it was a one of the roughest, roughest place in town. And on some occasions parents called me to come and help them with the disciplining of their children.

The State of Tennessee, Sullivan County did have the assistance of psychologists and psychiatrists, and Elizabeth reported that “I did [sic] take the children in for conferences with them.” She declared that it would be very difficult to describe all of her experiences as an attendance supervisor counseling children. She began, “Well, a lot of them had home problems . . . of course sometimes if the parents drank, sometimes they get jailed and sometimes they just would want to make their children, the older ones stay home and take care of the other ones, the little ones.”

In the mid-1960s, Elizabeth and the Kingsport attendance teachers were honored at a dinner for working to provide shoes for underprivileged children. A photograph appeared in the Kingsport Times-News following the event and it is presented in Figure 61.



*Figure 61.* A Photograph of the Photograph that Appeared in the Kingsport Times News for an Event Honoring Elizabeth for Her Service to the Underprivileged Children in Sullivan County.

Elizabeth and Paris made an effort to spend time with their grandchildren. Shirley and Bob went on weekends to spend the night with Elizabeth and Paris. Elizabeth let the twins help her bake cakes and cook breakfast. They always attended Wheeler United Methodist church and then enjoyed a relaxing Sunday afternoon. In the summer they grilled out lamb chops or hamburgers and ate outside on the back patio as presented in Figure 62.



*Figure 62.* Elizabeth and Paris Relaxing On Their Back Porch with Their Grandchildren.

One year Elizabeth made the twins coats to wear for Easter Sunday as presented in Figure 63.



*Figure 63.* Elizabeth With the Twins on Easter Sunday Modeling the New Coats That Elizabeth Had Made for Them.

In the late 1960s, Paris opened Pendleton Real Estate in Blountville with an office right next door to the Sullivan County Courthouse. The office building was large enough for several offices so Elizabeth made an office for herself in the rear area of their office. For 5 years in the 1960s, Elizabeth's niece, Lucille Jackson, worked for Paris at his real estate office in Blountville

and as part of Lucille's job responsibility, she answered Elizabeth's phone line and took messages from the principals who called in with student attendance problems for Elizabeth to solve. Lucille recalled those calls and Elizabeth's response to the problems:

But the principals would call and call in everyday of who was absent. And she [Elizabeth] would go and sometimes I would go with her to Long Island or Bell Ridge or somewhere to visit children that was not in school.

And she would never go in the house [when she thought it was too dangerous]. She would always sit up in the car beep the horn and make them come out. I've gone with her several times.

Lucille also helped Elizabeth with her school reports that were turned in to the county and state levels. Lucille described the work in much the same as previously described by Elizabeth, "Yeah, any of the principals that called in and say so and so is absent. Go check on them to see what's wrong. Well, a lot of time I would go with her. She wanted somebody to go with her, so I would go with her." Lucille explained that the students had various reasons for not attending school. She stated that some students:

Just didn't wanna go to school. A lot of them didn't have clothes. Also, she [Elizabeth] would also get clothes for them through J.C. Penney's . . . She would go there and ask for clothes for children who didn't have any. . . and [then] they [the principals] would sent them to Penney's to get the clothes, shoes, whatever they wanted. She [Elizabeth] would go through – I don't know what organization it was, but she did go through to get, see if they had clothes.

Most of them [the absent students] were just absent. They weren't sick. They just didn't want to go to school. Long Island was the worst one she had. It was pretty rough down there and she didn't want to go to Long Island by herself. So I usually went with her most of the time.

She would call them, whoever it was, J.C. Penney's, to tell them that she is sending so many people in there. This kid that didn't have any clothes, send them with clothes, send them with shoes. But Long Island just didn't wanna go. Especially Long Island, they just didn't want to go to school. Very seldom, they were very sick, they were really sick. But she would not go in the house and visit any parent or any students. They always came to the car. She said I don't trust going in to the house. I don't wanna get in, so I make them come to the car. So I usually went with her to the - basically, Long Island most of the time. And the road was gravelly and all that. I worked with her quite a bit.

At the time of the interview, 30 years had passed since Lucille worked in the office with Paris and Elizabeth. Lucille fondly recalled, “Ah she was always, to me, she was always truthful, she was always bright, she was always smiling and she was always good to me, all the time. And Red [Lucille’s husband] used to aggravate her a lot, quite a bit [for fun]. He thought the world of her and he called her the ‘old woman.’”

When Elizabeth was asked about the particular schools or areas of the county and if the socioeconomic status of the parents was related to truancy problems, she explained that, “Well, Indian Springs and Miller-Perry were about the highest class or the, let me try to [explain], I mean their parents above average, from those two in the community were the best schools in Sullivan County, grammar schools.” She commented that “[the parents had better jobs] and that “They were just – [they] cared more about their children.”

The children of parents in less affluent communities struggled more with truancy issues and she continued to share more memories. For example, she said that:

Gravely School was [sic] one of the county schools had problems, yeah.

Well, Long Island they had problems but they Long Island, all the people in Long Island respected Long Island School and when they walked in the schoolroom they behaved.

I had quite a few parents who got drunk, [or would] be drunk and [the parents] ...[would not allow their older children] come [to school] because they had to take care of the little ones [their younger brothers or sisters] or maybe some of them had been jailed.

In Long Island maybe some of the parents would go to work at morning and maybe just five or six-year-old children that maybe they [would] clean them up and just put them right on the porch or out on the street to go to school and some of them, they walked and they just go ahead and go to school, I mean then whenever the bell rang.

Elizabeth noted a correlation between a community . . . “where the parents are highly educated or well-educated [and a community where the parents are less educated] you usually find less problems than you do because of the parents--- who [sic] cared more about their children, yeah.”

She attributed another difference in problems in the schools as a difference in leadership and leadership styles, “Well, what about the, was there a difference in principals, was there a difference. Yeah, some of the principals were stronger leaders than the others, yeah.” She was hesitant to speak of people who had passed away and could not speak up for themselves, but she mentioned Mr. Hall at Indian Springs, Mr. Ashworth, and Mr. Glen Arwood were strong leaders. She stated that, “I never had any trouble working with them. Any of them I don’t think.”

Elizabeth shared what she considered to be one of the best examples of her rewarding career:

I had this boy [as a student in math class] and he didn’t like his math and he was real, real smart and he’d spell anything and read and everything but he had always been passed. The teachers never failed him even when he couldn’t work his math. So when he got to my class I said, “Jack [Carter] you are going to learn the math” and that was when I was teaching math . . . at Miller-Perry, yes.

Anyway, I said, “I just won’t pass you” and he thought, “Oh yes, I would pass him and so he didn’t pass and I failed him. So his father wasn’t very happy about it. But I said [to his father], “Well Mr. Carter I figured you want him to go to high school don’t you?” [And he replied], “Oh, yes, yes.” And I said, “He sure has got to learn his math and he might as well not go on now and learn it, he’s got to learn it.

So then Jack came back the next year [in my class] . . . and he said, “I wasn’t a good math teacher.” And but anyway, so he decided I meant it, and [sic] he just jumped in and learned it and he learned it and liked it. And he went on to high school and graduated, went on to college and graduated with a math degree, a degree in math and taught school, math in high school until he retired.

At the age of 89, Elizabeth commented that her favorite memory as a student herself was:

Oh I used to have a great time going with the teams to play basketball. Yeah, I enjoyed that a good deal. But I enjoyed school. I wasn’t really an A student all the way through because the subjects that I took in high school were difficult. Now in grade school I made all the good grades. But when it came to Latin, when it came to . . . geometry and, and algebra, I wasn’t, just you know [was not a strong student].

I never would have passed trigonometry in college if my brother [Sam] wasn’t excellent in math and he coached me all the time. And see, made me learn it, I mean, he explained it until I understood it, yeah. But I didn’t make any A’s in it.

When asked who were the people that influenced her the most at Holston and at Hiwassee? She responded, “I’d say Mr. Clark [the high school principal and basketball coach].” She said that it was not his leadership skills that impressed her, but “it was just his personality. He was, he was a nice person.” She reported that Mr. Clark later became the Superintendent of Sullivan County Schools. And, she reported that she greatly respected her college basketball coach – they never lost a game-- and that he later became the President of Hiwassee College.

For a few years, Elizabeth owned and operated a small business, Libbie’s Sewing Shop, in Colonial Heights, TN. She opened the shop to give an immigrant from Ireland, Mrs. MacDonald, a position as a seamstress. Mr. and Mrs. MacDonald were of the Catholic faith—Elizabeth had known few Catholics because there was a small population of them living in East Tennessee when she was growing up and her culture had caused her to be wary of Catholics. The MacDonalds were living on a meager income in a tenant house that Elizabeth and Paris owned.

Elizabeth recognized the fine quality sewing and tailoring work that Mrs. MacDonald could do and while the shop never made a profit, the income benefited the MacDonalds. Elizabeth maintained the shop until Mrs. MacDonald was quite old. The MacDonalds continued to live in the tenant house for several years until they passed away. When the MacDonald’s passed away without funds for their funerals, Elizabeth and Paris assisted with their funerals and other expenses.

Libby’s Shop sewed and or altered new articles of clothing for walk-in clients, and also custom made clothing. Libby often explained that she was not a fine seamstress, but she occasionally helped in the shop until the day she cut off the same sleeve of a man’s expensive shirt two times instead of cutting off both sleeves. She laughed about it for years. While she owned the sewing shop, the ladies who worked at the shop made the cheerleading outfits for

Paula and Louise's team of cheerleaders at Sevier Middle School, and she sewed dresses for their spring choral program.

In the 1960s and 70s, Elizabeth and Paris took brief vacations. They traveled with Bob and Shirley and the grandchildren, and they took the grandchildren and great-grandchildren on special trips to Hilton Head, SC, Gatlinburg, TN, Florida, North Carolina, Kentucky, and Ohio. Paula and Louise recalled visits to Gatlinburg each summer before school began and Darby recalled a visit to his father Bob's family in Cincinnati, OH. Figure 64 and Figure 65 present Paris and Elizabeth on vacations with family members.



*Figure 64.* A Photograph of Elizabeth and Paris with Granddaughter, Louise, and Great-Granddaughters, Allison and Rachel Bailey in Gatlinburg, TN.





*Figure 65. A Photograph of Elizabeth and Paris Visiting with Elizabeth's Sister, Ava Slaughter, In Ft. Myers, FL.*

Paris and Elizabeth maintained an active social life. They usually had plans each weekend to play cards and go out to eat with family and friends. Elizabeth was especially close to her sisters and sister-in-laws. Elizabeth's daughter Shirley recalled that:

She [Elizabeth] was influenced a great deal by two sister-in-laws. Beginning early in her married life she was influenced by Janie Earles both socially and financially. Janie's husband, Doc, owned several businesses in downtown Kingsport including two drug stores and they were prominent members of Kingsport society. Mother took me to town nearly every Saturday and we went to the Earles' drugstore. Janie was the one who planned the six-week trip out west.

She [Elizabeth] maintained a close friendship with and was influenced by her sister-in-law, Sue Hendricks, who was a very excellent example of a lifelong learner. Sue loved adult education and she took up art and pottery as a mature adult and won several honors and awards for her art. Sue was a world traveler. After Daddy [Paris] passed away, Aunt Sue and mother traveled for several years making trips to the British Isles, to the Caribbean, and on several bus tour trips.

Elizabeth spent 42 years employed by the Sullivan County School System with 22 years in the classroom, and 20 years assisting the students in the lowest-income brackets and in the roughest areas of the county, helping families improve their life situations. When asked if she was treated fairly as a employee of the Sullivan County School system in regard to gender issues as a female supervisor in the 1950s – 1970s, she quickly replied, “Yes! I was treated fairly, [in fact] my assistant was a man. The superintendent for most of the years was J.C. Akard, and he treated everyone fairly.” Two of the superintendents who Elizabeth worked for attended her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday party, J.C.Akard and Jim Fleming as presented in Figure 66.



*Figure 66.* A Photograph of Jim Fleming (Left) And J.C.Akard (Right) At Elizabeth’s 80th Birthday Celebration.

Elizabeth said she and her husband, Paris, did not start saving any money until later in life. She said that her husband was supportive of her working—he was working, and when their daughter was young, she was in school while Elizabeth was teaching. Paris did not have a formal college education, but he did have some special training from ETSU. Paris was very intelligent and a skilled businessman. She said that he was much better in math than she was. However in later years when she was a grandmother, when she told him that she wanted to work on her

master's degree, he said, "I think that you have gone to school enough." While she was a little disappointed at the time, looking back she said it was a good decision not to continue to work and go to school at the same time during that period of her life.

Paris had worked in the county courthouse for several years, was assistant county highway commissioner, and was active in Republican politics all his life. He ran for several county offices and as state representative, but was not elected. A few samples of Paris' political advertisements appear in Figure 67 and Figure 68.

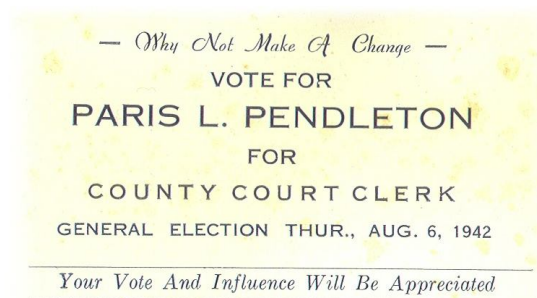


Figure 67. A Sample of Paris' Political Advertisements.

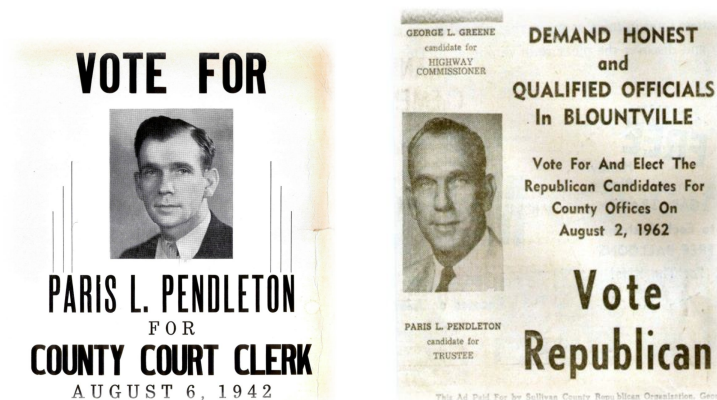


Figure 68. Photographs of Political Advertisements in 1942 and 1962 When Paris Ran for County Court Clerk and Sullivan County Trustee.

Pendleton Real Estate was a small business run by Paris in a quiet old-fashioned country-gentleman business style. They had only a few employees over the next 20 years. After Lucille

left the office for employment as an aide at Blountville Elementary School, Paris hired Martha Gammon, Elizabeth's niece by marriage. She knew Elizabeth well and answered the phone for Elizabeth the same as Lucille had done when Elizabeth was out making calls on students or schools.

Elizabeth appreciated the trustworthy, calm personality that Paris had with people, and she enjoyed telling a story that demonstrated the type of personality that Paris had when dealing with people. This incident involved a business client who was dissatisfied with his purchase of a property. She exclaimed:

Paris, of course you know, was in real estate and his office was next to the courthouse and Paris always went to [observe] county court [Sullivan] which happened maybe once or twice a month. Anyway, Paris was over at [sic] the courthouse and the [dissatisfied] man went [to the courthouse] and he asked the fellow who was keeping the door that he would like for him to call Paris Pendleton out and Paris came out and the man said [to Paris] First thing to him -- take off your glasses, I'm gonna hit you," and Paris said, "Well before - I take off my glasses for you to hit me, will you please tell me what your gonna hit me for?"

Well, I can't remember just exactly what it [the cause for the client's dissatisfaction] was, but it was somehow a misunderstanding between Paris and the man. Paris had sold him a piece of property and he found out he didn't have quite enough money to take care of some of the costs and but Paris said they talked a while and negotiated and compromised and went back over to Paris' office.

And then Paris ended up by loaning him some money to take care of the things that he didn't understand he had to take care of and he was a friend of Paris' from then on. So [this is an example of Paris' composed and unruffled personality] really Paris very calmly asked him what he was gonna hit him for which took care of things and Paris was a calm sort of person that much ... fuss carry on anyway. But [later] they [Paris and the man] laughed [were very friendly] about him [Paris] asking the man what he was gonna hit him for.

In addition to Paris' real estate career and Elizabeth's career with the Sullivan County Schools, they earned income through raising sheep and tobacco on their farm. Paris usually had approximately 200 head of sheep and they raised approximately 5 acres of tobacco. They had a

tenant house on the farm and tried to find tenants who would help tend the farmland, fences, and tobacco and help Paris with the sheep. In the late 1960s packs of dogs began to kill the sheep. Paris protected the sheep as much as possible, but the problem grew out of his control when his eyesight began to fail, so he sold the sheep. He and Elizabeth did keep ponies and horses for their grandchildren, and the herd grew to 65 ponies before they sold the herd. Elizabeth maintained her love of horses her entire life. She spent several summers helping Paula train her horse, Playboy.

## CHAPTER 12

### SPICE OF LIFE SENIORS: THE DOGWOOD TREE YEARS

In 1966, Paris had eye surgery that caused a series of minor strokes and left him with extremely limited vision. Living on a farm became troublesome for Elizabeth and him so as a Christmas and anniversary present in 1967, Paris gave Elizabeth the keys to a modern new house in Dogwood Acres a mile northeast of the Tri-City Airport, a neighborhood on a half-acre tract of land nearer to his office in Blountville, TN. While Elizabeth was pleased with the idea of living in a modern 3-bedroom, 1.5 bathroom brick ranch, she was hesitant to leave the farmhouse that she and Paris had built. After a year and a half, she reluctantly moved to the new house. Figure 69 presents a photograph of the house in Dogwood Acres.



*Figure 69.* A Photograph of the House that Elizabeth and Paris Lived in Between 1968-1988.

As a means of relaxing and enjoying life, Paris and Elizabeth sold their first cabin on the lake and purchased one that was near the Tri-City Airport. The lake house was located on Gammon Road property that had belonged to Elizabeth's father when she was young near the

junction of the Watauga and South Holston Rivers prior to the TVA creating the lake. Elizabeth and Paris spent several summers staying at their lake house on Boone Lake and Elizabeth often retold the story of riding her horse, Pearl, around the area near their lake house, and carrying lunch to the farmers who worked for her father as they worked out on an island in the river hoeing or planting corn or some other crop.

Elizabeth and Paris enjoyed the peacefulness of the time they spent at the lake. They spent most of their time on the large screened-in porch that was near within 75 feet of the lake. Paris and Elizabeth spent quite a bit of time in their 50 horsepower speedboat cruising on the lake, having lake picnics and cook-outs, and playing cards in their lake house. In 1970, Paris purchased a new 125 horsepower speedboat –mostly to have a new safer boat for his granddaughters, Paula and Louise, to drive when they were teenagers.

Elizabeth and Paris continued to work in the 1970s and they remained fairly active in their church and community. In 1973, Elizabeth was at the hospital when her first great-granddaughter, Allison Elizabeth Bailey, was born. She and Paris babysat Allison so that Louise could teach dance on Saturday mornings, and other times when Louise needed help. Elizabeth was delighted when her second great-grandchild, Rachel Leigh Bailey (1975), was born and she helped take care of her also. Additionally, she bought them new dresses for Christmas, Easter, and when they were older for the beginning of school each year. The children enjoyed spending time with Elizabeth and lovingly called her “Libbie.”

When she retired in 1976 after working in public education for 42 years (teaching in the classroom for 20 years and working as a supervisor for 22 years), she reported that her salary was \$1,200 a month – plus traveling expenses for visits to meetings, schools, and for student visits. After her retirement from the Sullivan County School system, Elizabeth took the State of

Tennessee Real Estate exam and obtained her real estate license. She went to work full time for Paris at Pendleton Real Estate. Their daughter, Shirley, was also employed at the Pendleton Real Estate office. The office was small, but Elizabeth remained busy. She helped Paris list and show houses, and she sold property – especially small lots that were unrestricted and allowed mobile homes. Elizabeth and Paris ate out for lunch every day and at least once on the weekends. On one occasion when Elizabeth was a senior citizen, she rescued her niece Lucille from a fall on an escalator at the Bristol Mall. Lucille remembered the traumatic event:

We went to the mall in Bristol and I got on the escalator and Aunt Elizabeth, she stood there and held me to keep from falling on that escalator. She kept calling for help and she followed me out to the hospital and she saw that I got home alright and I – if it had not been for her I probably would not have made it. Because I had fallen, I turned around and fell. She got behind me and stood there to keep me from falling over on that escalator And she came to the hospital with me.

In her later years, Elizabeth was active as a volunteer in her neighborhood for the March of Dimes and the American Heart Association. She attended regular meetings of the Sullivan County Retired Teachers Association, and served at least one term as treasurer. As a business person, she participated in the planning of several celebrations in Blountville, and other civic fundraising events. Figure 70 depicts one of Elizabeth's booklets from her years as a member of the Sullivan County Retired Teachers Association. Figure 71 presents a photograph of an article in the Sullivan County news on business leaders. Elizabeth was featured in the newspaper article.



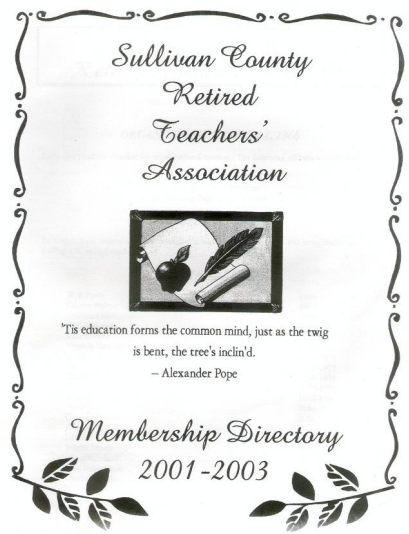


Figure 70. A Photograph of a Sullivan County Retired Teachers' Association Booklet.



Figure 71. A Photograph of an Article in Sullivan County News Featuring Elizabeth as a Business Woman.

Always an active member in Wheeler United Methodist Church, Elizabeth served as a Sunday School teacher, a director of Vacation Bible School, as a member of various church committees, and as a member of United Methodist Women in two church circles. She was pleased for years to host her circle's annual Christmas meeting at her home.

In 1980, Paris and Elizabeth celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary. They renewed their wedding vows at Wheeler United Methodist Church and the family hosted a reception in the church social hall. This was a special event for Elizabeth because she and Paris had eloped, so this was a memorable time for her. Figure 72 present the photographs taken at the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration.



*Figure 72.* Pictures from Elizabeth and Paris's 50th Wedding Anniversary.

As Paris' health continued to deteriorate due to congestive heart failure, so Elizabeth limited her activities and spent almost all of her time with Paris. Because his eyesight was poor, she drove him to appointments and events. However, they often entertained and played Rook and Bridge

games with family members especially Paula and Louise and their husbands. In addition to her own nieces and nephews, Elizabeth was especially close to Paris's sisters, Janie Pendleton Earles, and Sue Pendleton Hendricks. In 1981 and 1982, Paris was in and out of the hospital several times a year. During the final months of his life, Elizabeth hired help to care for him while she went to the real estate office for a few hours each day.

When Paris was ill, Paula and her husband, Keith Cate, moved into the Dogwood Acres house to help care for Paris and maintain the household chores. While the Cate family was living with Paris and Elizabeth, the third and fourth grandchildren, Christopher Keith Cate (1981) and Kevin Pendleton Cate (1983) were born. Of course, Elizabeth was right there interested and eager to help.

Paris passed away on July 18, 1982, and Elizabeth was pleased to have Paula and Keith living with her for a few years. Paris no longer needed her daily care so Elizabeth resumed her regular activities, and Paula and Keith built a new house and moved into it. Elizabeth never really enjoyed living alone so she spent much of her time at the Cate's new house on Country Drive and visiting with Louise's family also on Country Drive. She increased her participation in church activities that included Bible studies, church festivals, visitations to nursing homes, and church dinners. She traveled with daughter, Shirley, several times a year to Hilton Head, S.C. where they purchased a condominium near the beach for family vacations. She and Shirley also traveled to New Orleans to a business convention.

One of the events that Elizabeth participated in was her church's annual talent show. She performed with her Sunday School class and as a solo entertainer. For a few years, her granddaughter, Louise, and great-granddaughter, Allison, helped her learn and perform a dance routine fully costumed with lei and grass skirt to the tune of "I'm A Little Hula, Hula Baby" or

dress up as a “southern belle” and perform to “In the Good Old Summertime” and she was a hit at the event –with much personality and flair for entertaining. Figure 73 presents Elizabeth in a solo number and Figure 74 presents Elizabeth with the women in her Sunday School class.



*Figure 73.* Elizabeth Performing a Solo Talent Number in a Wheeler United Methodist Church Talent Show.



*Figure 74.* A Photograph of Elizabeth and the Women in Her Sunday School Class Ready to Perform for the Talent Show. Elizabeth is the First Person on the Left.

She enjoyed attending the Holston area Senior Citizens Group that met at Wheeler. She was active as a senior citizen and with politics and she rarely, if ever, missed voting in local, state, and national elections. Often politicians sought her advice and support as a respected member of the community.

Elizabeth's family remained extremely important to her. She initiated celebrations and gatherings with her siblings for birthdays and holidays and maintained contact with them through cards and phone calls when she was too elderly to go visiting.

Elizabeth believed in the power of prayer and was known for her deep Christian faith. She prayed daily for all her siblings, nieces and nephews, and their families, and her children, grand-children, great-grandchildren, and great – great grandchildren. Occasionally she prayed out loud and her Bible and prayer time lasted 2 hours. She shared her faith often and thought that it was important that she set a Christian example of attending church, reading her Bible, and having daily prayer. When she was older, she enjoyed a large-print Bible that was so worn that the pages fell out as pictured in Figure 75.



*Figure 75.* A Photograph of Elizabeth's Large-Print Bible Given to Her by Steve Bailey.

When her daughter, Shirley, was divorced from Bob Ratcliff in 1969, she continued to treat him as a dear family member. In fact, when she was in her 80s, she and Bob sat together every Sunday morning at Wheeler United Methodist Church. Prior to his death from a heart attack in December 2002, Ratcliff wrote a poem about Elizabeth being a “lady for all seasons.” He poetically described Elizabeth as being a “Shakespearean beauty” and he explained that “love flowed from her for all to see” (Ratcliff). The poem clearly expressed Ratcliff’s admiration for Elizabeth, “this lovely, powerful lady of wisdom and grace” and his appreciation of her for the love and kindness she showed him during “all seasons” of their 50-year relationship.

The poem accurately expressed her optimism and strength to all who knew her through times of hardship or times of happiness. The poem is included in Appendix B.

For years the family had a tradition of gathering at the home of Elizabeth and Paris for Sunday dinner (lunch). The menu usually included fresh vegetables and chips (Bugles were Elizabeth’s favorite snack for years), salad served with Elizabeth’s homemade salad dressing (a concoction that she did not measure that included ketchup, mayonnaise, onion powder, Worcestershire sauce, pickle juice, and cottage cheese), fried or baked chicken or roast beef, potatoes, fresh Southern cooked green beans, corn or other vegetable, bread, and dessert. Elizabeth made delicious homemade vanilla custard, pumpkin pies, and various apple desserts that were always served with ice cream or whipped topping. She continued the Sunday dinners until she was nearly 80, and then she assisted Louise with continuing the traditional family gatherings every Sunday, birthdays, and holidays. She always offered to help bring food to Louise’s and was well-known for her green beans and coleslaw.

Always conscious of her health, she drank plenty of water and fruit juices. She thought that soft drinks were “gut washers” and needed to be avoided. Elizabeth was fond of eating

vegetables and fruit – especially apples. For years, she and Paris had apple and cherry trees on their farm and she ate a nightly snack of a fresh apple. She was not a huge fan of red meat, but ate chicken and loved Virginia country ham and biscuits.

Although Paris had smoked cigarettes his entire married life, Elizabeth did not smoke or use tobacco products. She rarely drank except for medicinal purposes – when she had a “belly ache” or cough. A family remedy passed down from her parents and one she recommended frequently to her family members included a tablespoon or two of whiskey, some honey, and lemon. In her later years, she would accept a half glass of beer for stomach ailments or to aid with digestion. And, she often referred to home remedies for illnesses or ailments and her mother’s use of homemade blackberry wine for treatment of common health ailments.

Most of her mature adult life, Elizabeth took a daily Flintstone chewable children’s vitamin (a habit she acquired when she was encouraging her grandchildren and great grandchildren to take their vitamins) and a baby aspirin. She had a natural aversion to medicines that increased with aging – she disliked taking antibiotics or any other prescription medication as the medications upset her stomach or created other issues that she described as being “worse” than the illness. Ironically, it was likely that a substituting doctor over-prescribed a medication when she was in the hospital for “observation” due to a stomachache that led to a kidney crisis and a slight stroke from which she ultimately never recovered.

Elizabeth had been active physically her entire life. As a child she enjoyed playing outside and horseback riding, and as a youth and young adult she played basketball. As an adult, she assisted with the lighter farm chores and she enjoyed attending community dances. As a mature adult in the late 1960s, she joined a spa fitness center, and as an older adult, she developed her own stretch and exercise program that she did every morning when she woke up.

She continually “watched her weight,” and in the 1970s she lost about 20 pounds on the Weight Watchers Diet, but she remained robust and slightly overweight until the last 6 months of her life when she had a drastic 60 pound weight loss.

Elizabeth was one of the people referred to as having “never met a stranger.” She took great pleasure in conversing with whomever she met and making “connections” with people and places. When she traveled via airlines or when she was in a checkout line at a grocery store, she made new friends with anyone who would talk with her. She had a natural interest in learning about people and places.

As a member of a large family, Elizabeth had several nieces and nephews and great-nieces and nephews with whom she had close relationships. As an active, interesting person, the nieces and nephews recognized and appreciated her interest in their lives. She had a unique ability to give other people a sense of their own significance.



## CHAPTER 13

### FINISHING TOUCHES: THE CREPE MYRTLE TREE YEARS

During the time that Elizabeth was in her 60s in the 1970s to her 80s in the 1990s, she helped granddaughters Louise and Paula with their children. In 1987, the Cates gave Elizabeth her fifth great-grandchild, and they named her Elizabeth Lacey Cate in honor of Elizabeth. When granddaughter and grandson-in-law, Paula and Keith, moved to Columbus, Ohio, in 1988, Elizabeth decided to move from the Dogwood Acres house and purchase Paula and Keith's house on Country Drive because it was located directly across the street from granddaughter, Louise and her husband, Steve Bailey, and children.

Elizabeth then rented the Dogwood Acres house and continued to work at Pendleton Real Estate driving to Blountville. After several years when Elizabeth was in her mid 80s, they closed the office in Blountville, and because Shirley was a real estate broker, they transferred the real estate office address to Elizabeth's home address on Country Drive, and Elizabeth continued to assist some clients with their real estate needs.

Elizabeth enjoyed her home on Country Drive especially when the Cate family came for lengthy visits in the summers. She was fond of having flowers in her yard – her favorite was scarlet sage. Even in her late 80s, she planted a row of scarlet sage and several chrysanthemums. In one of the years of the new century, she had particularly lovely flowers and asked her grandson-in-law, Todd Dickson to take some photographs. Two of the photographs are presented in Figure 76.



*Figure 76. These Photographs Show Elizabeth on the Front Porch and At the Back Porch of Her Home on Country Drive.*

When Paula's children were young, Elizabeth traveled to the various locations where Paula and her family lived including Ohio, Maryland, Alabama, and Florida. She helped Paula and delighted in the time spent with her great-grandchildren celebrating birthdays and other special occasions. She often stayed with the Cate family for 2 or 3 weeks at a time attending Little League baseball games, basketball games, piano recitals, church musicals, and school events. When her great grandchildren, Christopher, Kevin, and Elizabeth were young, she visited their classes at school. Occasionally, she spoke to the classes at school or read to students at the

invitation of the teachers. She greatly influenced their lives and was an inspiration to them. The photograph in Figure 77 presents Elizabeth on a visit to the Cate's home attending a festival in Baltimore, MD.



*Figure 77. A Photograph of Elizabeth, the Cate Family, and Friends at a Park Enjoying a Festival in Baltimore, MD.*

Elizabeth enjoyed family vacations so she accepted every opportunity to join in family vacations usually in Florida or to Hilton Head, SC. She and Shirley purchased a quarter week condominium at Brigantine Quarters in the Shipyard Plantation area in 1985 and she traveled there with family – always paying for her share of the expenses and assisting with other expenses to help out. Figures 78, 79, and 80 present photographs of Elizabeth on family vacations.





*Figure 78.* A Photograph of Elizabeth with Grandchildren, Paula and Louise, and Great-Grandchildren Rachel, Chris, and Allison on Vacation at Disney World in 1992.



*Figure 79.* A Photograph of Elizabeth with Granddaughter, Louise, Grandson-In-Law, Todd, Great-Granddaughters, Allison and Rachel, and Great-Great Granddaughter, Stephanie on Vacation at A Park in Savannah, GA.



*Figure 80.* A Photograph of Elizabeth with Granddaughter, Louise, And Great-Grandchildren, Rachel Bailey and Elizabeth Cate at Hilton Head, SC on the Beach.

Elizabeth's family hosted grand birthday parties for Elizabeth's 80<sup>th</sup>, 90<sup>th</sup>, and 95<sup>th</sup> birthdays. Approximately 100 guests attended to celebrate each of these milestone birthdays with Elizabeth. The 80<sup>th</sup> party and the 95<sup>th</sup> party were held in the social hall at Wheeler United Methodist Church in Blountville, TN. The 90<sup>th</sup> birthday party was held at the home of her granddaughter and grandson-in-law, Louise and Todd. Figures 81, 82, 83, and 84 present Elizabeth at those birthday celebrations.



*Figure 81.* A Photograph of Elizabeth and Shirley Cutting the Birthday Cake at Elizabeth's 80th Birthday Party.



*Figure 82.* . A Photograph of Her Grandson-In-Law Keith Cate Making a Speech at Elizabeth's 90th Birthday Party as Her Daughter, Shirley, and Granddaughters Paula And Louise Stand with them to Welcome the Guests.





*Figure 83. Elizabeth and Her Younger Sister, Preston Mills, At Elizabeth's 90th Birthday Party.*



*Figure 84. A Photograph of Elizabeth Greeting a Guest at Her 95th Birthday Celebration on September 25, 2004.*

In her mid 80s, Elizabeth enjoyed visiting and taking car rides around the region and telling stories about the people who lived or worked in the community—it seemed as if seeing the various locations jogged her memory and she would add a new story or retell a special

memory. Occasionally, she would request for listeners “to tell her to stop if she had told the story before;” however, most of the time, the listeners were interested in hearing her stories again and again – sometimes there were new additions to old memories.

She was always active in community and school affairs. From her years with the Sullivan County school system, she remained friendly with several principals and teachers. She spoke to the principals and teachers concerning her great-grandchildren’s progress in school and she expected Allison and Rachel to represent the family as “model” students. However, when they were not “model” students, she remained supportive. Elizabeth was very active in their lives – transporting Rachel home from ballgames at Holston Middle School, and helping Allison with everyday occurrences.

In addition to helping the grandchildren and great-grandchildren, Elizabeth went on brief

visits to the home of her daughter, Shirley, and son-in-law, Fred Carlson, in Florida. She took a Caribbean cruise, traveled to the British Isles, and took several group bus travel vacations to Greenbrier, KY, Nashville, TN, Ashville, NC, and other regional tourist attractions.



*Figure 85. Elizabeth on a Cruise Vacation Practicing a Fire Drill.*

Figure 85 features Elizabeth on a cruise vacation practicing a fire drill on a ship and the other photo features Elizabeth on a tour preparing to board a bus for a travel vacation, Figure 86.



*Figure 86. Elizabeth on a Tour Preparing To Board a Bus.*

Holidays were always a treat for Elizabeth and were celebrated with joy and love. Two photographs are presented in Figure 87 on Easter Sundays. Other



photographs appear in a photography gallery in Appendix C.



*Figure 87. Photographs of Elizabeth on Easter Sundays in the 1970s and the 1990s.*

After age 85, Elizabeth began to slow down her active lifestyle. While her spirit and intellect never faltered, her body began to weaken. She still spent daily time participating in family events. She lived next door to her granddaughter, Louise, and her husband, Todd Dickson, and she had interaction with them daily. Louise helped her shop, took her to doctors' appointments, and assisted with her daily needs, and Todd helped with her household needs and repairs. Elizabeth was never dependent on her family for her care, but she appreciated their assistance and she enjoyed spending time with them. She came to dinner at the Dickson's several times a week and always spent time with them on Sundays. She was never satisfied living alone – she was grateful for family and friends to surround her. She continued to have wonderful relationships with family and friends. Her great-niece Laura Ann Mills, her sister's granddaughter, moved in with Elizabeth for a few months in the early 2000s. After Elizabeth's death, Laura sent a letter to Louise as a tribute to Elizabeth that is included in Appendix E

Births of grandchildren and great-grandchildren were highly important to Elizabeth and she made an effort to help with each new member of her four generations of descendants. In 1993, Elizabeth flew home from a visit to Maryland to Kingsport, TN the day her first great-great granddaughter, Stephanie Ash, was born and enjoyed spending time helping with Stephanie. Figure 88 presents Elizabeth with three of the newly born and young great-great grandchildren.



*Figure 88. Photographs of Elizabeth with Three of Her Four Great-Great Grandchildren Born While She Was Living.*

Elizabeth maintained an interest in Sullivan County schools and spoke in person with the principals, Bill Barnes and Elizabeth Sells, each year that Stephanie attended Indian Springs Elementary School. On Grandparents' Day, she visited Stephanie's class, and on special days, she told stories to the children. Elizabeth was equally as delighted when the second great-great grandchild was born, Sam Stewart (1996). In the year 2000, she, her daughter, Shirley, and granddaughter, Louise, attended Stephanie's school for Grandparents Day. The teacher took a photograph of Stephanie's three generations of grandmothers in attendance at the school.

Elizabeth loved to tell stories and jokes – and was always the center of conversation at parties or celebrations. At special events like weddings or other family celebrations, she proudly stood and made eloquent speeches. All the family was in awe of the touching words, encouraging orations, and inspirational speeches that she delivered with a natural flair for rhetoric and that she presented with deep care, love, and admiration for the celebrant.

She seemed to sense the significance of her words and wisdom as she entered the final decade of her life, and she often repeated stories with significant social, moral, or spiritual meaning. For example, she would use stories or sayings to encourage her family that saving each penny would soon add up to be one dollar, turning out unnecessary lights would save energy, wives having a nice hot breakfast or well-prepared dinner for their husbands to show love, learning to “do for yourself” to be independent, and working hard to earn an honest living, attending church regularly, and praying daily would lead to a successful life.

Elizabeth was actively engaged with people during her entire life. On holidays and special occasions she received cards and letters from people whom she loved. She saved cards and letters for years and years. There are an estimated 300 cards and letters to Elizabeth that are in the family archives.

One example of a note was from Janet Dickson, Todd’s mother, she wrote: “What a joy it has been for us to know you and your wonderful family. You are truly an inspiration to those who meet you because you are so kind and thoughtful of everyone. Happy 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday to a dear, sweet, special lady. Our Love, Janet & Don.” Another note was from Elizabeth’s pastor, Dennis Loy who wrote, “Happy Birthday, What an absolute joy it is to be with you at Wheeler [United Methodist Church]. More than just the connection with my mom [she had been her

teacher] but our growing friendship in Disciple Class. I greatly admire and love you! Honest!! Beth and Dennis Loy.”

Her grandson Chris Cate wrote, “Happy Birthday Libby, I can’t tell you how much I have appreciated everything you have done for me throughout my life. I love you so much and hope that you continue to be such a wonderful influence on me for years to come. Congratulations, Chris Cate.” Her granddaughter, Rachel Bailey De Luise wrote, “Every day of my life, you have been there showing and teaching me how to live. You are a shining example to all of us of how to be the best people we can be. Your generosity blesses us and your kindness and integrity inspire all who know you. I feel blessed by God that you are my great-grandmother! We Love You, Rachel and Anthony.”

When Elizabeth was 90 years old, her great-granddaughter, Rachel, and husband, Anthony De Luise, moved in with her at the house on Country Drive. She thoroughly enjoyed having Rachel and Anthony live with her. They took her out often and shared meals with her, and she was grateful for their company. She was especially pleased that they joined Wheeler United Methodist Church and attended church with her each Sunday. Elizabeth was proud that Rachel and Anthony became youth leaders who were active in church affairs. She remained somewhat independent but appreciated someone driving her to meetings and appointments, especially at night. In the year 2002, Rachel completed her master’s degree and Anthony accepted a position in Tampa, FL, so Elizabeth tried to live alone. She was never happy alone—she gained strength and energy from being with family and friends.

Libbie thoroughly enjoyed going out to eat even when she had to carefully watch what she ate late at night, but she went just to be with everyone even if she ate only a small fruit pie or baked potato. The last several years of her life, her favorite place to eat was Cheddar’s Casual

Café, where her great-grandson, Jerry Stewart, was the general manager, and great-granddaughter, Allison, was an assistant to the manager there for several years. Elizabeth always ordered Cheddar's spinach dip and loved the potato soup that they served.

At age 92, Elizabeth was diagnosed with macular degeneration, a condition that changed her life because she could no longer see well enough to drive. Nevertheless, she maintained her car in good working condition and kept an active driver's license – always hopeful that her eyesight would improve. The condition limited her activities and she hired her former office manager and friend, Martha Gammon, to assist her during the day. They went out to lunch, traveled to Blountville to pick up her mail, and attended church activities.

She also began to have other health-related issues with some stomach problems, kidney infections, arthritis pain, and general age-related fatigue. When her help was not there and Louise and Todd or Allison was not available, her great nephew by marriage, Mike Earles, a surgery technician, and his wife, Peggy, a nurse, helped care of her. Mike and Peggy had a way of handling the situation and reassuring her and she was grateful for their kindness and concern. Even during the difficult days, she remained hopeful for and faithful for a “new day” and she was appreciative toward those who helped her.

She was always interested in the quality of education that her grandchildren were receiving. She visited the schools, spoke with the principals and the teachers, and attended many school events. Elizabeth's great-great-granddaughter, Stephanie, followed Elizabeth's footsteps as a basketball player for Holston 70 years later – except that Holston was a middle school and not a high school in the 2000s. Elizabeth attended several of Stephanie's basketball games even when it was too difficult for her to climb the steps or sit in the bleachers and her eyes were so

weak that she required help to locate Stephanie in the basketball court. She delighted that Stephanie was an excellent athlete, and she cheered for Stephanie's team to win the games.

Elizabeth continued to visit with the Cate family in Tampa, FL and they spent several weeks each year staying with her at her house on Country Drive. She also traveled with Louise and Paula on a train excursion to visit Shirley in Florida, and she traveled with Todd and Louise to have brief visits with Shirley in Florida. On a few occasions, she got a handicapped sticker and flew to Florida to visit.

When her niece, Martha, had some health issues, Elizabeth hired other helpers to drive her to the post office, to the bank, to Bible study, to other church meetings, and less and less frequently to visit sick or elderly friends and relatives. One of her favorite helpers was a friend of Louise's, Patricia Skelton. Elizabeth greatly appreciated the help that she had and maintained a kind, thankful, cheerful attitude with each person who helped her. She participated in church activities as much as she felt able, made phone calls to sick and elderly people in her community, and she was content being with friends and family members. Having lived through both world wars and the depression, one of her favorite sayings was, "don't worry about money, if you have your health, some intelligence, and some gumption, you can make money." Her Bible study notes and lessons from the Sunday School classes she taught remain in the family archives. Even when she was quite frail, she tried to eat well and do mild exercising each morning before she got out of bed.

Always a teacher, in 2003 when Elizabeth was 94 years old, she participated in an oral history video-interview project for her great-grandson, Chris Cate, who was then a student at Auburn University in Georgia. The video-interview took place at Elizabeth's childhood home on Minga Road in Sullivan County where her younger sister, Preston Gammon Mills, lived.

Elizabeth visited with Preston often and was comfortable and eager to give the younger generations a tour of her house sharing explanations, descriptions, stories, and memories from her childhood. Paula Cate asked most of the interview questions while other family members listened. The videography was done by Chris Cate and it is stored in family archives.

As if she was a young teacher or hostess, while walking with a cane through the dining room of the 200 year-old house, Elizabeth pleasantly recalled, “Well breakfast, ordinarily [was served in the kitchen], but if we had company we ate in here [the dining room] and we usually had company the biggest part of the time.” She said that the table was round and that 13 people could sit at the table. As she looked around the dining room and into the hallway toward the front door, she proudly reported:

Daddy remodeled this house when I was 4 years old, yeah. A lot of this oak stuff like the doors and that oak trim was daddy’s own lumber cured and sanded down and everything. And this hard wood floor here and all these floors are tanned and grooved by hand, yeah, yeah.

Now in the old house which part of it was built in the late 1700s – see daddy added this, and this, and this, and three rooms upstairs in 19 and 13, so I was only 4 years [old]. And of course this china closet, right over here. That was part of daddy’s, I guess way back, maybe 200 years old too, yeah, aha.

She pointed out the baseboard wood, “It was wide, it was kind of wide plank like you know and ah it was beautiful. . . Baseboards– now that was that’s oak, it’s all solid oak.”

Then with a youthful twinkle in her eye, she pointed to the stairway and chuckled, “And I used to slide down these things –see – these banisters, see these banisters were here in the late 1700s, yeah. And I would go upstairs, then, I would slide all the way down and end up here, yeah!”

As she made her way upstairs in the house, she pointed out the parts of the house that had been built in the 1700s and the parts that were remodeled by her father. The older sections of the home had the wider planks.

Paula Cate asked Elizabeth to describe the room she slept in when she was a little girl, and she responded, “I slept in this room over here when I was a little girl, yeah. All, all of the girls . . . Ava and Mary Eva and Preston and I.” She reported that the bedroom had “two double beds . . . Preston and I slept together, yeah. And there was a fireplace right here, then. Yeah, and that’s what we warmed our upstairs with.” She continued, “If we had somebody spending the night, we had beds that rolled under and you pulled them out you see and then we would – I don’t know – I guess we would put it in the middle.”

Elizabeth grew physically weaker and she required help with her meals and daily activities. She did not want to leave her Country Drive home but decided to try living at a nearby assisted living facility, Steadman Hill, run by the United Methodist Church, in the fall of 2003. Louise, Todd, Allison, Jerry, Mr. Fred Bailey, and the great-great grandchildren helped her move her bedroom furniture and some of her living room furniture into a nice one room, one bathroom apartment. At first Elizabeth was uncomfortable living there. Her great-great granddaughter, Stephanie, spent one night with her (sleeping in a recliner) and Louise visited every day. Elizabeth quickly adapted referring to the other residents as “her people” and she made new friends as she always had. While living there, she hired help to drive her to appointments, do her bookkeeping, and to go on other errands, and she continued to “get out” to town for brief shopping. She especially liked to shop at the Dollar Store.

Although she could no longer see well enough to read, she participated in Bible Study, Sunday church meetings, and other interesting learning activities held at Steadman Hill. She especially enjoyed the live entertainment (choral groups, musicians, gospel singers, etc) who visited Steadman Hill. Several local churches had volunteers who came to Steadman Hill and presented programs and refreshments. The church choir from Colonial Heights United Methodist



Church came several times and she was pleased because her nieces and nephew-in-law, Catherine Slaughter Gilbert, Betty Slaughter Starnes, and Gerald Gilbert, sang with the choir and she was very proud of them.

Always interested in people and having a good time, Elizabeth also took pleasure in the parties and the holiday activities that the staff planned. In Figure 89 Elizabeth received special attention from Santa.



*Figure 89. Elizabeth Receives Special Attention from Santa.*

She had various visitors week after week that included Mike and Peggy Earles, Archie McLemore, Helen Pittman, Whit Cross, Darby Ratcliff, and Stuart Albee, her pastor at Wheeler United Methodist Church. Occasionally she had visits from J.C. Akard, Laura Mills, Dorothy

Ratcliff, Tricia Skelton, and other relatives and friends. She had daily and sometimes several times a day conversations with Paula, Louise, and Shirley. To Elizabeth's delight, grandson Kevin Cate called frequently.

Elizabeth was in relatively good health and most of the family expected her to live to celebrate her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. The last birthday that she celebrated was for her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday, on September 25, 2004. The family hosted her birthday celebration in the social hall at Wheeler United Methodist Church. Prior to the birthday party, the family gathered at the River View Farmhouse for photographs. Darby, her grandson, was living in the house and it was a lovely, warm, bright sunny day. Elizabeth's daughter, Shirley, the three grandchildren, spouses, the five great-grandchildren, spouses, and four great-great children were in attendance as presented in Figure 90.



*Figure 90* A Family Portrait Photographed on Elizabeth's 95th Birthday at the River View Farm Home That Elizabeth and Paris Built In 1932.

At the party, Elizabeth seemed to forget that she was 95 years old and she greeted guests, laughed, and talked as if she was at her high school graduation. She had a twinkle in her eye, was light on her feet, and responded to each person who spoke to her with excitement and enthusiasm. The party was deliciously catered and elegantly presented by the women in her church circle, Alice Lee Barnes, and over 100 people attended the party or sent cards. Elizabeth seemed to gain energy from being with people.

The family of her brother, Robert Lee Gammon, was unable to attend the party. One of Robert Lee's daughters, Alice Gammon Fleenor, sent a birthday note:

Dear Aunt Lib,

We are so sorry to miss this big birthday celebration . . . I wanted to share a cherished moment you gave to me and my siblings. Many years ago, you must have had the job of being the Sullivan County truant officer. Part of this job must have been to help the poorest of our rural area. We (Peggy Sue, Sam, and myself) will never forget you coming to our home with three boxes of shoes. It was like Christmas in August. It made us proud on the first day of school. So, I am thanking for this warm spot in my memory with the kindness you had for us. Happy Birthday and have many more.

Love, The Robert Lee Family, Peggy Sue, Sam, Mary Alice, Mark, Bridgette, and Jane

A few months after the party, Elizabeth began to have some difficulty with high blood pressure and stomach pains. She was diagnosed with an abdominal aneurism, but was otherwise in fair health. At Steadman Hill she had assistance with showering, dressing, and medications. A beautician came to the assisted living facility once a week and she had her hair washed, cut, and styled nicely and they had a daily cleaning service and laundry service that picked up her dirty clothes and returned them nicely cleaned. Otherwise she was able to take care of herself and she ate in the dining room with the other residents. Sometimes she was not satisfied with the menu, but she seemed to find something she liked to eat at each meal. She always made an effort not to complain, but occasionally she would ask whether or not it was a good idea to live as long as she

had lived. She became very interested in looking at the sky and clouds and commenting on the days that the sky was a deep, deep blue as if she was considering a “move” to heaven.

After the first of the year in 2004, her stomach pain increased and she complained often to the nurses. They were hesitant to treat her because they knew she had an aneurism, so they often told her to see her doctor or go to the emergency room. Louise and her paid helpers took her several times within a month or so. During an episode of stomach pain and high blood pressure on a Friday afternoon, her doctor sent her to the hospital for a 24-hour observation. Over the weekend, a substitute doctor strongly increased a medication that he thought would help her. The medication caused her to have a reaction, a small stroke, and kidney failure. She never fully recovered.

Several times she said that she saw visions of her family members who had passed away years before. She said to me when we were alone in the room, “Louise, do you see the others standing in the room?” I would respond “no,” and she said that her brother, Sam, or some other relative was there. This occurred more than a few times when Mary Edwards, a paid helper, was there with her. Later, after episodes like this, she said, “I almost went on to the other side or I almost went with them.” She seemed to be telling me that she was not yet ready to go but soon would be.

She spent the next few months in and out of the hospital and a nursing home owned by an affiliate of the United Methodist Church, Baysmont, where she received good treatment and she paid for full-time caregivers in addition to the nursing staff. Shirley and Paula called often, but they lived in Florida. Although mentally, Elizabeth remained alert and always glad for visitors, she grew increasingly weaker, was unable to walk unassisted, and lost her appetite losing 40 pounds in about 6 months.

In May, Shirley came from Florida, thinking that she would take Elizabeth back to Florida with her, but Elizabeth was too weak. Instead, she was happier to return to her home on Country Drive with Louise living next door and hire full-time caregivers. Once back at home, she first improved, and was so pleased to be surrounded by family, but still was unable to gain weight or strength.

Elizabeth's caregivers were wonderfully kind – they kept journals of her treatments, medication, baths, and other bodily functions. They brought her food from their gardens, rubbed her back or legs, and bathed her. They assisted with the necessary physical needs, and sometimes prayed with her. When school was out in June, Paula and Rachel (both teachers then on a summer break) came to Tennessee to help Libbie. Louise prepared some of her favorite foods to entice her to eat. She was able to eat a Jello salad when she could no longer swallow easily. Shirley took over the communication with Hospice and oversaw the medications that Elizabeth received. When her pain increased, they gave her three drops of morphine every several hours.

By mid-June her family was by her side 24 hours a day, reading to her, brushing her hair, and talking to her; however, her body continued to weaken. On Thursday, one week before she passed away, when she was barely able to talk, Louise's cast of singers (about 40 men and women) who were practicing for their summer ShowTime performance, gathered in her room and sang "Angels Watchin' Over Me." At the end of the hymn, with Paula by her side holding one hand and Louise on the other side holding her hand, Elizabeth brightened up and asked for prayer. Melissa Woods, a soloist and church choral director, prayed a beautiful prayer thanking God for Elizabeth and for comfort and healing.

The last days of her life, Paula rarely left her side, and all the other family members gathered around helping as they could. The day she died, Paula, Louise, Rachel, and Shirley

stayed with her most of the day. Todd and Rachel read scripture to her, Peggy Earles (Mike her beloved grand-nephew, was serving in Iraq) visited, and everyone told her how much they loved her. The last time I saw her alive, I told her that I loved her and although she was too weak to speak, she communicated back to me with her eyebrows that she loved me too . . . as always teaching us. She passed away on June 23, 2005.

The services were held at Wheeler United Methodist Church by the Reverend Stuart Albee. The printed funeral program contained words from the family that I wrote based on the scripture, Proverbs 31:28:

Her children will rise up and call her blessed . . .

Libbie was a family treasure, and honored by all who knew her. She was devoted to her family, her faith inspired us.

Libbie was a “mother” to all the generations of her family. She told us interesting stories—sharing her years of wisdom and experience.

Libbie was an optimist—always looking for the best in everyone and in every situation. She was kind, caring, and always hospitable.

Libbie was affectionate and supportive. She had a resilient, independent spirit, and she looked forward to each new day.

Libbie was generous with her time and energy. She had a great sense of humor—and often told jokes and entertaining stories. She was a noble lady and a faithful Christian.

We were blessed to be her children . . .

At the funeral family members, Keith, Darby, Kevin, and Anthony spoke at the funeral. Keith presented the eulogy and told of his respect for Elizabeth in which he presented an insightful description of Elizabeth:

Libby was a leader.

Strong to the core,

A survivor,

A humble servant,

A supporter of everyone,

Libby was a spiritual role model.

She had a great sense of humor, and could tell wonderful stories from the past, even though she often scrambled the names.

She was so easy to laugh with.

And she changed with the times and adapted to life . . .

Keith is a television news anchor and he further commented on Elizabeth's life:

I have to tell you, as a person in the news business... Libby kept me on my toes.

She knew all about current events, sports and politics.

Her primary source later in life: Fox news.

She loved to talk about the issues. And the topic didn't matter.

Of course, she also loved to read...

But, more often than not... you could find her reading her Bible.

Darby spoke kind words about Elizabeth and eloquently thanked everyone for attending the funeral. Kevin, her 21 year-old great-grandson, was separated in age from his great-grandmother by 74 years. He spoke from his heart and his sentiments reflected our family's feelings:

I never had the privilege of knowing Libby as a girl, or even as a woman, I knew her as my Great-Grandmother. In her wealth of age, Libby had found purpose and passion in her life, one that she had long before I existed, and one that continues to bless this family, she was our teacher.

Libby taught me countless lessons, from my childhood until her passing. One of my earliest memories that I can recall of Libby is her driving me to Kindergarten... in her old gray Oldsmobile. She would stop at each stop sign and ask me, "Which way now, Kevin? Left or Right?" I usually just took a stab at the answer and every once in a while I got it right. She would sing me a song either way, but eventually I learned, with her guidance...the way to our destination.

One of the last memories that I have of Libby, as she lay in bed, speaking only in whispers ... so close to becoming something so beautiful...she was still teaching... She told me that if I was ever in need, just look up to the sky and say "Lord, help me."

What I didn't realize as a child seems so obvious now. Libby was a teacher because her spirit was not that of her own. The same as she had taught me my direction as a child, as an adult, she inspired my life and my faith with her love, her compassion, and her wit.

The lessons that Libby taught, they are not memories, they are now part of who I am. . .

A few months after Elizabeth's death, her great-granddaughter, Rachel wrote a reflection on Elizabeth's death titled "Passage." The complete reflection is included in Appendix C. Rachel's words provided a richly woven description of the last hours of Elizabeth's life:

She was 95 when I held her hand and read to her softly from the book of Proverbs, stroking her brow. She couldn't speak in the end; her throat was parched and dry, but her stories still floated around in my subconscious. Every now and then, I pulled the pieces together and sat silently.

Hospice workers moved around her, taking note of her vitals, administering morphine. On a warm summer evening, quietly in her bed, she departed. That must have been so hard for her to wait until we left her side. She loved company, she loved to talk; she was a storyteller.

We all arrived the next moment –daughters and granddaughters from next door. As women, we stood alone in our individual pain; alike in blood, joined in ancestry, descended through the decades, sharing in a necessary transition of life. In similar skin, she lay before us, on her own bed, softly resting on our memories.

Elizabeth lived a life full of purpose and passion leaving a legacy of leadership, lessons, love, and laughter.



## CHAPTER 14

### FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

With the news information of the increasing population of aging Americans, educators have recognized a need to study and understand the process of lifelong learning and the effects of learning on aging. The NIA stated: “the face of aging in the United States is changing dramatically and rapidly . . . Today’s older Americans are very different from their predecessors, living longer, having lower rates of disability, achieving higher levels of education, and less often living in poverty” (*Dramatic Changes*, 2006), thus, the need exists for a better understanding of the aging process and of the connection between living longer and learning.

This study focused on the individual life journey of Elizabeth Pendleton, who lived until age 95 in Sullivan County, Tennessee. The data included transcriptions of video and audio interviews held with Elizabeth Pendleton between 2000 and 2004, interviews with 26 individuals between August 2007 and February 2008 who had a personal relationship with Elizabeth Pendleton, and personal conversations and correspondence with seven other friends and relatives. Other data that were analyzed included family archival records, letters, books, artifacts, and photographs. Prior to her death in June 2005, Elizabeth Pendleton expressed her support of this study and was eager to participate. An extensive chronological narrative based on a combination of her words and the words of individuals who knew her well was examined and subsequently analyzed for the purpose of enhancing scholarly knowledge on lifelong learning.

Elizabeth Pendleton was not well known outside of her community and did not accomplish any outstanding feats on a national scale; nonetheless, she had a high quality of life. Covey (2007) describes individuals who live in “everyday greatness” and certainly Elizabeth

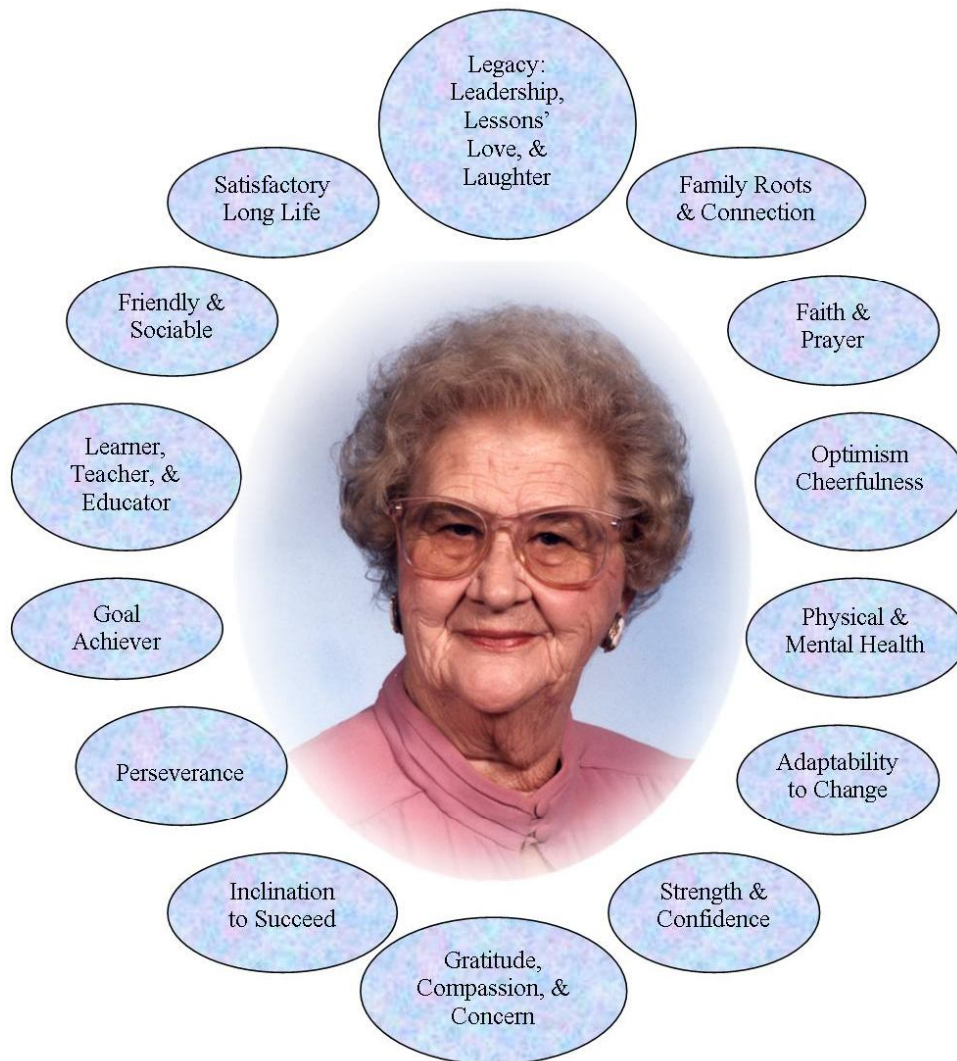
Pendleton appeared to be one of those individuals who lived everyday in greatness. Covey wrote that some people live in “everyday greatness” as a way of life – living by the “goodness” that radiates from the person who is motivated more by humble, small, and simple good deeds than grandiose accomplishments ( p. X). Elizabeth Pendleton was viewed by many individuals as the type of person that Covey referred to, although not in the same terminology. The study revealed that Elizabeth had similar life principles as those referred to by Covey.

Other researchers have made connections between the type of increased life satisfaction and the principles that Covey mentioned and termed it lifelong learning. Hayes (1998) explained: “More and more we hear the term ‘lifelong learning’ used in connection with the kind of learning required to earn a living, but this misses the point . . . knowledge sought critically and passionately, for its own sake, gives purpose and meaning to living” (p. xiii). Consequently, Hayes expressed the notion that the “. . . quality of life hinges on continuous learning . . . Continuous, self-directed learning is the greatest means we have to navigate our way through life . . . [and] learning becomes the greatest act of self-determination” (p. xvii). An analysis of the life journey of Elizabeth Pendleton, and interviews with individuals who had close relationships with her revealed associations between her inherent lifelong learning, the Covey model, and the Hayes conjecture.

The study is presented in the form of an educational biography as described by Dominicé (2000), because it offered “basic data for thinking about education as a much broader phenomenon than formal learning alone” (p. 3). Because “most adult learning occurs outside formal education” (p. 4), it was necessary to explore the life culture, society, and circumstances of the individual to understand the process of learning. Therefore, as the literature suggested, themes that emerged from the educational biography provided a means for understanding

lifelong learning. The findings of this study were organized as responses to the research questions and discussed in context of a) the related literature; b) Elizabeth's words presented in the form of biography; and c) the words of participants based on their descriptions and observations of Elizabeth. Figure 91 presents a photograph of Elizabeth and the 14 emergent themes identified by the participants as attributes (characteristics, traits, beliefs, and attitudes) describing Elizabeth.

**Elizabeth Armetta Gammon Pendleton (1909—2005)**



**Lifelong Learner: Emergent Themes Identified by Participants**

*Figure 91.* A Figure Presenting the Emergent Themes Identified By Participants as Attributes Describing Elizabeth Pendleton.

### Summary of Findings

Question 1: What were Elizabeth Pendleton's personality traits, beliefs, attitudes, and characteristics that led to her motivation or inclination toward lifelong learning?

#### Related Literature - Summary

Lifelong learning is not a new concept (Yeaxlee, 1929), but the globalization of the world, the rapidly changing society, and the aging population of America have pressed the need for acceptance of a philosophy of lifelong learning as a national priority.

Recent general media information on healthy living in the United States has suggested that along with proper nutrition and exercise, stimulation of the brain assisted older adults with better memory and brain function. With the rising population of older Americans, lifelong learning has been reported to be beneficial for a higher quality of life among this population.

Nussbaum (2007) identified factors that contributed to a healthy life. As pointed out in Chapter 4, the individuals who knew Elizabeth described her in words that support the presence of the five factors of optimal brain health that Nussbaum identified as successful aging. These connections include the notion that healthy aging consists of: socialization, physical activity, mental stimulation, nutrition, and spirituality (Nussbaum, 2007).

In a 2003 article released by the News Bureau of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Barlow confirmed that a study revealed that the “three key areas of the brain adversely affected by aging show the greatest benefit when a person stays physically fit. The proof, scientists say, is visible in the brain scans of 55 volunteers over age 55” (2003). The article stated further that “fitness training was found to show robust but selective benefits for

cognition, with the largest fitness-induced benefits occurring for executive-control processes” (Barlow, 2003).

#### Elizabeth’s Words Summary

Elizabeth never used the term lifelong learner, but analysis of her biography disclosed a direct correspondence with researchers’ descriptions of lifelong learning as a person who was a nonformal, informal, and formal learner. For example, 1) as a child she stated her interest in horses and playing outside; 3) as a student at Holston Institute, she described her involvement in school activities such as basketball and the literary society; 3) she recalled enjoying attending Holston and being inspired by teachers and coaches; 4) she mentioned overcoming the grieving process when she was 14 and her mother died; 5) she recalled the social activities like picnicking and courting, enjoying family and friends; 6) she referenced her apprehension about attending college but her success with graduation; 7) she pointed out her years as a new teacher and later as an experienced teacher; 8) she remarked about the years she served as the Supervisor of Attendance for Sullivan County Schools and the help she was able to acquire for the students in need; 8) she indicated the hardships that she overcame as a young adult during the depression and WWII; 9) she discussed her return to college during middle age as a non-traditional student; and, 10) she cited her travel experiences and love of family. Her biography connected her life to the life of a lifelong learner in numerous other situations, and the participants in the study added their descriptions and observations of Elizabeth that confirmed her inclination toward lifelong learning.

#### Participants’ Words - Summary

The participants in the study overwhelmingly stated that Elizabeth was a lifelong learner as evidenced by the chart in Figure 6 on page 71. Their comments concerning the personality

traits, beliefs, attitudes, and characteristics that led to the motivation for her to be a lifelong learner were categorized into the four major areas: 1) Traits: Elizabeth's family roots with her connection and devotion to family members—her ancestors, her relatives, and her descendants being often referred to as the “loving,” “caring,” “matriarch of the family” who was “totally unselfish” and held in the “highest regard” by all who knew her; 2) Beliefs: Elizabeth's “deep faith in God,” her “daily prayer life,” her “continued desire to strengthen her knowledge of the Bible,” and her “participation and dedication to her church”; 3) Attitude: Elizabeth's “optimistic,” “cheerful,” “glowing personality,” and her “genuinely positive outlook on life”; and 4) Characteristics: Elizabeth's “physical condition” including her “sharp mind” and “good memory,” “healthy eating habits,” and “commitment to daily exercise.”

Traits. Elizabeth openly showed her love and concern for her family and often told stories from her childhood and family heritage especially anecdotes about her parents. One participant among several stated that her father was “a huge influence on her life” and that “he evidently was a Godly man, a good Christian man.” Elizabeth's daughter, Shirley Ratcliff Carlson, said Elizabeth learned from “her father- his attitudes about how to treat other people” and “his ideas about money and how to do business,” and most importantly, his “work ethic.” Regarding Elizabeth's mother, Carlson added that Elizabeth often quoted “mother said” and “mother would do.”

Elizabeth “connected” with family and non-family members. A few non-family participants referred to Elizabeth's relationships with people stating that they felt that Elizabeth treated people like “everybody belonged to her,” that she “always made each individual [non-related person] feel as a welcomed part of the family,” and several reported that she was “like a grandmother to me” even though she was not related to the respondent who made this comment.

Some participants observed her commitment to her family members commenting that she “put her family first in everything,” and that she “understood the importance of family.”

Her treatment of her family was observed as “being loving and kind” not only “in her actions, but in what she was thinking.” Elizabeth told several people that she was “very appreciative of her family” and that she was “delighted” to have time to spend with her family. Several nieces and nephews commented that she was “their favorite aunt,” that she was “a good one” and that “she was always there.” Most considered her to be the “matriarchal leader of the family.” Elizabeth’s family mentioned over and over that Elizabeth provided “steadfast” and “unconditional” love for them and they held her in the “highest regard.”

Beliefs. Elizabeth’s beliefs were Christian based. Faith and prayer were reported as an everyday occurrence for her. Almost all participants referred to Elizabeth’s prayer life with phrases such as: “she prayed for you all every day,” “she prayed for them every day,” “she prayed out loud and often,” and “she prayed for people that were important to the family, to her family, whether they were here or whether they were somewhere else.” Others reported that she “prayed for strangers.” Her grandson-in-law, Anthony, and granddaughter, Rachel, recalled Elizabeth’s fear of 18-wheeler trucks and her method of dealing with them:

One of the stories I heard lots and lots of times which I think is a perfect example of [Elizabeth’s belief in prayer], of Libbie teaching and showing who she was, was anytime we went on the Interstate, I know you all know this story, and a truck was going by, she told [sic] a truck story that I know she feared and despised those large, 18-wheeler trucks. But, you know what, she tried to overcome her fears and she gave the truck drivers a wave. She gave them a honk of the horn every time – [and said] ‘God bless you truck driver.’ She hated those trucks just because they were so big and always would frighten [her], but she said, ‘God bless you’ to those trucks, to those truck driver and that’s just . . . Overcoming her own fear but giving of herself and blessing something that she was fearful of every time a truck went by.

Participants pointed out that Elizabeth was “raised in a Christian home,” “very active [in church],” “a devout Christian” and that she had a desire to “widen and to strengthen her faith,”



“live a virtuous life” and that she had a “very traditional” and “strong belief in God.” Others remarked that Elizabeth “loved attending Bible study and church services at Wheeler United Methodist Church.” A former grandson-in-law, Steve Bailey observed that “she was the most Christ-like person I have ever known.”

Attitude. All of the participants made references to Elizabeth’s optimistic, cheerful personality, and her positive outlook on life. They proclaimed that Elizabeth “loved life,” “liked to laugh,” “was always ready to share a story or joke,” “was always jovial” and “always had a smile on her face.” Further, they asserted that Elizabeth “had the ability to see good in every situation,” was “always positive,” and that she was “always, always optimistic.” Some suggested that she “knew that “tomorrow would be an improvement” and that her “personality made people want to be around her.”

Her great-granddaughter, Elizabeth Cate, said, “Libbie believed that people were inherently good and it was her belief that people were God’s creation that led her to love so wholeheartedly.” Other participants confirmed the same type of thoughts maintaining that Elizabeth “always had a wonderful outlook on life,” and that she “poured out love and kindness to everybody” and that Elizabeth always advised people to “look for the good.” Several participants spoke of her sense of humor declaring that she “would tease as a way to create humor but teasing in good fun and usually after teasing she would say “joke, joke.” Most participants announced that it was “a joy to be around” Elizabeth with “her positive attitude” “spontaneous,” “genuine,” and “glowing” personality.

Characteristics. The participants who had the closest relationships with Elizabeth spoke of her physical and mental health and her desire to maintain a healthy lifestyle. With a chuckle, most of these people said that “Libbie loved to eat” and that she ate plenty of “vegetables.” She

had a habit of saying that she wanted “just a bite or just a sup” of whatever other people were eating or drinking. Several spoke about her disdain for prescription drugs and her habit of taking a Flintstone chewable vitamin and a baby aspirin every day. A majority of these participants testified that Elizabeth liked to “start each day with exercise” and that she did not dwell on the negative aspects of health-related ailments. Her nieces, Betty Slaughter Starnes and Catherine Slaughter Gilbert, quoted words that Elizabeth told them about her exercise program: “I exercise before I get up, every morning I lift my legs up, bend them, and I put my arms over my head and I swing them around and I do my legs before I get up, every morning.”

One participant vowed that Elizabeth was in such great shape for her age because, “she didn’t drink, didn’t smoke, and was always on the go.” Several participants claimed that “she was always younger than her age,” “she never got old,” and that she had a “very active memory until the day she died.” Other comments about her mental health included that Elizabeth, “could tell you everything that was going on,” “her mind was clear as a bell,” that she “handled all her [business] affairs,” “ask bright questions and her mind was good and sharp.” Her great-granddaughter, Rachel Bailey De Luise, stated, “she chose to do longhand math instead of using a calculator to keep sharp math skills. She refused to let her mind fade away and she chose to keep her mind in an active, growing state.” She was referred to as a “gracious,” “super” “lady” by most participants.

The participants who had a less close relationship (presented in Figure 2 on page 67) with Elizabeth spoke of her “physical appearance,” “clothing,” and “posture.” Others used the terms “sophisticated,” “Southern,” and “aristocratic.” One participant used the term “Appalachian;” however, Patricia Skelton, an aide and friend, had a dissimilar description. She felt that Elizabeth had an “air or presence” about her that was “reminiscent of Queen Elizabeth.” With the two

images (Appalachian versus Elizabethan) seemingly dissimilar, both views represented matriarchal strength and most participants agreed that Elizabeth “carried herself well” “always dressed neatly” with her “hair fixed” and her “jewelry on.” Her niece, Catherine Slaughter Gilbert, referred to her as a “spunky lady” who was “proud of her posture” and “took care of herself.”

Question 2: What were the inherent factors that existed in Elizabeth Pendleton’s life that served as motivation toward the desire for lifelong learning and leadership opportunities?

#### Related Literature - Summary

Some of the factors presented in the literature associating an individual with lifelong learning were: adaptability to change, sharing of challenges and experiences, education, and good health. An Elderhostel website linked lifelong learning to an individual’s ability to learn, have an open mind, and share his or her challenges and experiences. The website stated: “we believe learning is a lifelong pursuit that opens minds and enriches lives. We believe sharing new ideas, challenges and experiences is rewarding in every season of life” (*Elderhostel*, 2007).

As discussed in Chapter 2, a report by the NIA, found a strong correlation between education and good health. The report indicated that individuals with higher levels of education experienced a positive effect on their health and well-being (*Dramatic Changes*, 2006).

#### Elizabeth’s Words - Summary

In her words, Elizabeth described the changes that she experienced in her lifetime. For instance, she experienced modes of transportation from riding a horse to school to modern transportation, cruises, and international jet travel. Other changes that Elizabeth mentioned were methods of communication from a community exchange switchboard phone to cellular phones, and from handwritten letters to the Internet and email. She participated in the school system from

the early years of one-room schools to the modern merged countywide schools and online education. She was born before women had the right to vote and she lived to see women as leaders in the United States government and other world governments. She lived successfully with good health, strength, self-confidence, compassion for others, and understanding through nearly 100 years of drastic social, cultural, economic, religious, and political changes from the age of the roaring 1920s to the present war on terrorism. Remarkably, she had a set of natural inherent traits that allowed her to accept changes and learn to cope with new ideas and new situations.

#### Participants' Words - Summary

The inherent factors described and observed by participants that served as motivation toward the desire for lifelong learning opportunities and leadership responsibility appear to be a combination of four items that include: 1) learning and adapting to change observed by participants as a desire to “always improve herself” and “adapt to change” and she was “always willing to learn”; 2) “strength” and “self-confidence” observed by participants as an “innate strength” and “resilience”; 3) “gratitude,” “compassion,” and “concern for others” observed by participants as an “instinctive compassion” for other people; and 4) an inclination to “succeed.” All the participants who responded to this question agreed that she was a lifelong learner and their detailed reasons and descriptions were convincing as indicated in Figure 6 on page 72.

Learner and Adaptor to Change Theme. A few of the factors participants related to learning and her adaptability to change. Some comments included: she was a “lifelong learner” “and she was not afraid of change,” “always willing to learn new things,” and she was “fascinated by the developments she saw in her lifetime.” One participant contended that Elizabeth was “very, very proud of having a formal education, but never pretended to know

everything there was to know” and that she “realized that there was always something new the next day or around the corner.” Her grandson, Darby Ratcliff, remarked that Elizabeth “believed in the promise of a new day” and that she taught him to believe in it too. Elizabeth was “always a reader,” “had a timeless personality,” and had “perseverance, a work ethic” combined with the “ability to accept life’s ups and downs.” Dorothy Hanner Ratcliff, the wife of Elizabeth’s former son-in-law, Robert Ratcliff, stated that Elizabeth “was open to new ideals and new things” and that she “blended well with every age,” “always wanted to learn something new with every decade that came along,” “kept up with everything that was happening now,” and “was always interested in new things.”

One of Elizabeth’s grandson-in-laws, Todd Dickson, regarded Elizabeth as a lifelong learner. He noted that she stayed current with news and technology: “She always watched the news and read the paper. Always wanted to know what was going on and stayed very current with things going on in her community. As she got much older, her eyesight and dexterity kept her from using computers directly but she did not hesitate to ask someone to look something up for her. She appreciated the power of computers.”

Two of Elizabeth’s great-grandchildren, Allison Bailey Stewart and Rachel Bailey De Luise, and her grandson-in-law, Anthony De Luise, felt that Elizabeth’s inclination toward lifelong learning was because she “adapted to change” and that she was “able to talk about the Internet and understand the concept of it at the age of 93” and that she knew that change was inevitable and she embraced it.” Anthony De Luise explained that Elizabeth “loved to learn --got her *Upper Rooms* [magazines published by the United Methodist Church] from Church, and she would read those, the *AARP Magazine*,” the newspaper.” They maintained that Elizabeth was “all about self-betterment and self-motivation” and that was reflected in “her interest in reading

and through staying current with events, watching the news, and several [other] ways that she learned every day.”

Martha Gammon, an employee of Pendleton Real Estate for 11 years and an aide-companion to Elizabeth for one year, described Elizabeth as a person who was “the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow,” and that “she loved to participate in all of that [informal learning like Bible studies] and she loved to learn and do things that she had never done before.” Her great-grandson, Kevin Cate wrote, “She kept up with everything . . . She loved just to get out. . . she was young at heart, and she was young in mind.” Cate explained that “she never retired from life” and that “she is definitely a lifelong learner. She kept up with everything . . . with the news on TV and she kept up with true learning in Church.” He exclaimed that Elizabeth wanted to be part of “what’s going on around town” and that “she liked to go places and do things” and “She enjoyed being part of everything – from the smallest thing to the biggest thing, it didn’t matter, she wanted to be a part of things.” Finally, other participants’ comments explained that Elizabeth lived “a model life to follow, was open minded, willing to accept changes, was interested in life and that she was a lifelong learner because she kept up to date on current events in community, local, state, and national politics.”

Strength and Self-Confidence Theme. Several participants listed Elizabeth’s strength, self-confidence, and core beliefs as contributing factors toward the inclination to be a lifelong learning. A participant explained that “life never beat her down,” because “she believed in herself and her own strength with God’s help” and this contributed to her “resilience.” Her grandson, Darby Ratcliff, described her as being “of the highest moral fiber,” and that she was always “taking the high ground.” Further, he stated that her “heartfelt beliefs that were near, near to her heart were part of her soul, her very existence from religious instruction, and from lessons

and experience.” He explained that she knew the difference between “right and wrong” and that “her clout was smooth as silk” and “in some areas as strong as new.” Elizabeth Cate, her great-granddaughter, and namesake, declared that Elizabeth Gammon Pendleton even “in her moments of physical frailty was full of strength. She was a strong woman and her strong character reinforced everything that people loved about her. She was true through and through, was honest and true, pulled her shoulders back and walked with confidence” and was “always full of emotion but only showed strength.”

Other participants explained that Elizabeth took “responsibility for herself,” and “looked after herself.” She was however, “wary of, of not being in control of her own mind and body [prescription drugs hospital episode], she inspired strength and she certainly modeled strength.” Additional comments included that “she was strong, a strong woman, -- the strongest woman that I’ve ever seen,” and that “she was always such a positive person and wouldn’t have let anything hold her back” and that “she was very independent.”

Gratitude, Compassion, and Concern for Others Theme. Another category of factors under Elizabeth’s inclination for lifelong learning and leadership responsibility was listed by the participants as being her gratitude, compassion, and concern for other people. Several stated that Elizabeth “never held grudges,” “embodied character,” and “understood others and treated them with kindness.” Nearly all the participants felt that Elizabeth “never knew a stranger, and “always made friends with whomever was nearby.” Some participants commented on Elizabeth’s “generosity,” “forgiving spirit,” “patience,” and “empathy.” Martha Gammon recalled that Elizabeth went well beyond the responsibilities associated with her work as the Attendance Supervisor for Sullivan County Schools. She explained that Elizabeth “did do a lot of work like getting shoes, especially shoes and clothes for the [underprivileged] kids” and that Elizabeth

“was free-hearted, loving, and kind.” She said that “Elizabeth wanted to go and visit sick and elderly people and take them something –anything that she could do [to help].”

Inclination To Succeed Theme. A final category of factors that participants described as inclination for lifelong learning and leadership responsibility was Elizabeth’s predisposition toward success. Several participants referred to Elizabeth as being “successful,” “not doubting herself or her abilities.” Most participants described Elizabeth as “always very energetic,” “serious about work,” and “always working” They described Elizabeth as being “busy” never “ready to retire” and “never being a quitter.” One observant participant said, “Elizabeth was successful in business,” and able to “look at situations objectively and honestly” and further, “able to look at situations objectively, and honestly, and to make decisions.”

Question 3: What were the obstacles and barriers that existed in Elizabeth Pendleton’s life that she overcame as a lifelong learner?

#### Related Literature - Summary

In *Everyday Greatness*, (2006), Covey described a type of “good” person whose life was “filled with integrity and moral fortitude . . . who has intentions that are honorable . . . those who do their best to provide sustenance and nurturance for their children,” and those who are “rich in character and committed to make a difference – each in their own unique way” (p. VII). Covey contended that the majority of people in the world were good, even though the world was “in commotion with a forecast for future turbulence and he proposed that people should be on an advancing pathway moving toward doing their best to be what he termed as transition persons” (p. IX). Covey described a transition person as “one who breaks the flow of bad—the negative traditions or harmful practices that get passed from generation to generation, or from situation to situation, whether in a family, a workplace, a community, or wherever” (p. IX). Additionally, the



description Covey provided was that a transition person “transcends” his or her own needs and displays “noble” characteristics. A transition person is a “catalyst for change” and a “healer” rather than a “victim” or a “carrier” (p. IX). Elizabeth was not aware of Covey’s definition of a “good” person or a “transitional” person; however, an analysis of her life reveals that she was a “good” person and a transitional person.

### Elizabeth’s Words - Summary

As other women who lived in the 20<sup>th</sup> century experienced, there were the obvious obstacles and barriers for women living in Sullivan County, Tennessee; unequal rights and limited opportunities for women in education and employment and a tradition of male dominance in the culture, government, financial, and religious institutions. Other historical and cultural factors served as barriers for women and men including reconstruction and recovery from the Civil War, WWI, the Great Depression, and WWII. Women living in the rural Appalachian mountains of northeast Tennessee were as affected and sometimes more affected than in urban areas by those barriers. Nevertheless, while Elizabeth made reference to family, historical, and cultural events, she did not seem to view them as barriers that affected her learning opportunities. At the time of her mother’s death, Elizabeth (age 14) overcame her grief, assisted with the household chores and responsibilities, and helped take care of her younger sister, Preston. When the Great Depression bank closings caused her father to lose the money set aside for Elizabeth’s college, she went to an open bank and borrowed the money to finish college. She accepted a position as a teacher receiving very low pay as part of her civic duty during the Depression and in the war years. When gas rationing was a necessity during WWII, she carpooled and made her way to work. After her daughter Shirley’s divorce from Robert “Bob” Ratcliff, she reached out to Bob and in the last years of her life, she sat with him at church

every Sunday. Elizabeth did not mention these items as insurmountable barriers, but simply looked to do her share and to hope for the promise of a new day.

### Participants' Words - Summary

Overcoming Obstacles and Barriers Theme. The participants overwhelmingly reported that they did not believe that Elizabeth recognized any barriers that prevented her from achieving her learning opportunities and leadership responsibility. They made comments to the contrary. For example, Anthony De Luise stated, "I do not think that she saw anything as a barrier" while "some things were harder to work around and or deal with, they could be overcome" and "I don't believe Libbie considered barriers, she took steps to overcome the challenges of growing older, and when she put her mind to it, there was nothing Libbie could not achieve." Shirley Carlson responded that her mother [Elizabeth] had, "only lack of opportunities/ she did not see anything as a barrier –just hurdles to overcome." Several other participant remarks included that Elizabeth "never saw any barrier and was always successful," "I do not believe that Elizabeth recognized any barriers in her life" and "not sure she ever saw barriers, just doors that needed to be opened."

On the other hand, a few participants commented that Elizabeth did have several serious hurts and disappointments in her life. The most often stated hurt was the death of her mother when she was 14 years old and the notion that she had wanted to have more children. Her granddaughter, Paula Ratcliff Cate explained, "A barrier in her life may have been the death of her mother, but she never felt sorry for herself." Cate also mentioned that Elizabeth "may have wanted to have more children." Several others mentioned the death of Elizabeth's mother as a barrier, with the following observations: "Earlier on in life, losing her mother early probably would have [been a barrier] – having to grow up a little faster," she must have "thought about

her mother every single day,” “losing her mother strengthened her, but that’s the biggest barrier I think she felt she faced in her life.”

A few of the participants recognized situations that they felt hurt Elizabeth deeply. One event that was mentioned was the untimely tragic death of Elizabeth’s younger sister, Preston Mills, in 2004 at age 91 from a fall down the basement steps in the Gammon homeplace. Her companion-aide and friend, Patricia Skelton discussed Elizabeth’s hurt:

She dwelled on how she wanted her [sister Preston] to come to assisted living with her you know. Be there, that she didn’t need to be staying in that house by herself and then when, when Preston fell down the steps and of course and injured herself and nobody found her until later she passed away. She [Elizabeth] dwelled on that, it really worried her. She thought about it a lot. She talked about it a lot. . . She had some sad times and she missed talking with her every day. . . she really missed her and it was like she was the last of her actual closest peers – that she was that close to.

A few other participants listed the aging process as a barrier for Elizabeth especially at age 92 with the deterioration of her eyesight due to macular degeneration. This ended her ability to drive and resulted in a feeling of dependency on others. One person mentioned the death of her husband, Paris, in 1984, at age 76 due to a heart attack from congestive heart failure. At least two participants mentioned that Elizabeth felt hurt when there was a divorce, death, or illness that occurred with her family or friends, but that she continued to love and pray for the ex-spouses and the families suffering from grief or illness.

Paula Ratcliff Cate pointed out that Elizabeth “turned the hardships of the Depression into an accomplishment when she went to the bank and got a loan to finish college at a time when women didn’t get loans very easily.” Rachel and Anthony De Luise summed up Elizabeth’s attitude toward barriers that was modeled by her father’s experience and attitude toward barriers:

I think that her mother dying when she was young was a huge, a huge part of Libbie’s ability to adapt to change because she had to do it early and she had to do it for her family

to be able to take care of everyone. She learned early. Also, I think her father losing his fortune twice was - It goes along the same lines with that that she saw that people had to adapt to, had to adjust to, to continue moving forward. So if her father didn't give up, [they] persevered. [Elizabeth's father] persevered and build up his fortune again [after the Civil War] and then lost it [during the Great Depression] and did [rebuilt] it all again.

To summarize, although Elizabeth lived in an era without equal rights and privileges for women, and she suffered from barriers and hurts, she overcame the obstacles and worked to look on the bright side of life.

Question 4: What forms of formal, informal, and nonformal education manifested itself in the learning journey of Elizabeth Pendleton and what effects resulted from these?

#### Related Literature - Summary

As stated in Chapter 2, Knowles studied and conceptualized adult education and learning with a division between informal learning and formal learning. He contended that taking an organized course (formal learning) was better for new learning while a club experience (informal learning) proved the best opportunity for practice and refining the new learning (as cited in Merriam & Brockett, 1997).

Later Combs, Prosser, and Ahmed added a third type of learning to Knowles' list. They proposed the three types of opportunities as a framework for adult learning with learning that occurred in formal institutional settings, informal, and nonformal settings (as cited in Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 26). Later, Merriam and Caffarella added the concept that informal learning was self-directed learning. They explained that all three categories were of "equal importance in the adult learning enterprise" and that there would "always be overlaps" among the categories (p. 26).

Another lifelong learning scholar, Jarvis (2004) pointed out the tendency for more educated people to seek learning opportunities and he suggested that these included libraries,

museums, radio, television, the arts, and travel. According to Jarvis, adult educators including Chadwick, Dadswell, Dale, Surridge, and Bowen, have noted the significance of informal learning opportunities and a number of studies have been published in this field (Jarvis, p. 30).

The NIA listed strategies to preserve brain health that connected education (lifelong learning), cardiovascular health, and physical activity as being associated with good brain health. Education was also referenced. The article stated: “higher levels of education correlate with both good cognitive and emotional function in the scientific literature” (NIA, 2006).

#### Elizabeth’s Words - Summary

The biographical section of this study incorporated detailed descriptions of Elizabeth’s experiences with formal, informal, and nonformal education – most of it in her own words. Briefly, her formal education consisted of primary school at the one-room Sunrise Elementary School, elementary through graduation from high school at Holston Institute in 1928, graduation from Hiwassee College with a teaching diploma in 1930, and a bachelor of science degree from East Tennessee State Teacher’s College, now East Tennessee State University in 1955. Elizabeth’s informal education occurred mostly through her membership and participation in Wheeler United Methodist Church, but also through the Order of the Eastern Star, her work and business associations (both in the field of education and as an affiliate broker of real estate) and conferences, and various other organizations. The nonformal education occurred at home living on a farm as a child, then as a wife and mother with participation in local community, civic, and political affairs, and finally as a senior citizen living in an assisted-living facility.

The effect of her formal, informal, and nonformal education manifested itself vividly with her commitment as a teacher and supervisor in Sullivan County School System, her participation in civic, church, and community affairs, and her desire to teach important life

principles and philosophy through lessons, love, laughter, and leadership. This occurred mostly through telling stories and setting an example for her generation and the succeeding four other generations of her family members, friends, and community members as a lasting legacy of her life.

### Participants' Words - Summary

The participants of the study accurately and colorfully described the manifestation of Elizabeth's educational journey through two main categories: 1) formal, informal, and nonformal category of teacher and educator; and 2) nonformal category of friendly, sociable, community member. The participants confirmed that her educational journey was manifested by the example for "her church," "her school," and "for her community." Dorothy Hanner Ratcliff described Elizabeth in the following terms, "she was a teacher, I think, whether it was in her church or her life or whatever; she was always teaching and learning. She was always a big part of the discussion . . . never happy to sit still and let life pass her by [she was] always teaching."

Formal, Informal, and Nonformal: Teacher and Educator Theme. A former public school student of Elizabeth's at Miller-Perry, Catherine Slaughter Gilbert, described her as "a good disciplinarian," "a good teacher," and commented that some people thought that Elizabeth "should have been principal of Miller-Perry Elementary School." Another former student, Margaret Garland Keith, described Elizabeth, who was her 7<sup>th</sup> grade homeroom and social studies teacher in 1945, as a "warm and caring person interested in the lives of others."

Nearly all participants referred to being taught life's lessons by Elizabeth. For instance, Paula Ratcliff Cate, explained, "she taught me to be thankful to God for family, taught me to be thankful to God for our health, taught me to never give up, taught me that hard work will pay off, [and]taught me to take time to enjoy life." Rachel Bailey De Luise reported that Elizabeth

“taught me that laziness is not acceptable, procrastination only prolongs the task, helping others was more important than helping myself, and she taught me to thank God each day for my blessings.” De Luise added some other areas, “She constantly told me that I was smart, capable, and loved even through some rough times and assured me that my mother loved me, and she taught me to treat men with respect.” Grandson Darby Ratcliff, said Elizabeth taught him the importance of learning life lessons, “she taught me wisdom has grown [and that] her wisdom will never die [because it was] the lessons of a long life history, and that we should draw back and reflect and look at the larger picture to take things in context of a long span of time.”

Elizabeth Cate, a great-granddaughter, recalled several areas in which Elizabeth taught her, “As a result of both her formal and informal education, she helped me learn how to read, encouraged me to do well in school, always shared her experiences of grade school, college, and teaching.” Cate added that, “Her stories definitely influenced me to want to achieve more, taught me that women could be smart and confident, taught me about life by example, showed me how to share, love, and be strong, and showed me the love of Jesus Christ.” Her eldest great-granddaughter, Allison Bailey Stewart, reflected on the method that Elizabeth taught informally, “She loved to tell stories . . . used stories to teach us about how to conduct ourselves and live our lives with integrity and honesty. There was always a story every day.”

Nonformal: Friendly, Sociable, Community - Member Theme. The participants in the study portrayed Elizabeth as being a very “friendly,” “sociable,” person who “could talk to anybody.” In their words Elizabeth, “always knew everybody and you felt like you knew her,” she did, “not know a stranger,” and “she would talk to anybody and everybody.” In fact, several people used the term, “never met a stranger.”

Ninety-one year old J. Craft Akard, Elizabeth's former supervisor as Superintendent of Sullivan County Schools, told that Elizabeth, "liked to socialize" and that she had "a wonderful personality," "was very relaxed," and "never had any trouble talking on any particular subject." He added that Elizabeth, "took interest in not only politics but anything in the community, she took an interest in it, and if there was something she could do to help the sick, and so forth, she would do that."

Betty Slaughter Starnes, a niece, depicted Elizabeth as, "marvelous, wonderful, just wonderful, a sweet person, a sweetie pie, definitely a sweetie pie." It was important to Starnes to note that Elizabeth "always kept in touch." She said they "enjoyed playing Rook [with Elizabeth and Paris]."

Most of the participants added that since she passed away, they "miss her every day" and also several commented that in addition to being a "talker," Elizabeth was also a "listener." Patricia Skelton commented, "I just always loved Elizabeth Pendleton. I had admired her for years and years – always admired her, and just couldn't help but love her. She loved company, she really cared [about people], and I miss her every day." Lucille Cross Jackson, an employee of Pendleton Real Estate for 5 years and a niece of Elizabeth, remembered that Elizabeth, "never had an enemy, and never did see her mad, never did see that woman mad." A neighbor and former student, Margaret Keith, said that Elizabeth "exhibited kindness and concern for the comfort and well-being of others."



Question 5: What effects (influences) did the life of Elizabeth Pendleton have on her family, church, and community that resulted from her lifelong learning and leadership journey?

#### Related Literature - Summary

While there is not a universal definition for lifelong learner, a core definition is that lifelong learning is all learning activity undertaken throughout life, whether formal or informal (Harvey, 2004) and the definition used in this study for the phenomenon of lifelong learning is: a process of acquiring knowledge and expertise from childhood through adulthood.

The concept of effect (influence) implies that one individual has the power to directly or indirectly affect the lives of others. In other words, the legacy, which refers to influence which is passed on from one generation to the next; such as, religion, tradition, or philosophy. In regard to the influence of Elizabeth Pendleton, I prefer to think in terms of the influence as a legacy of shared wisdom. Researchers share various opinions on the influence or legacy that one individual imparts. Merriam and Caffarella (1999) expounded that wisdom was the hallmark of adult thinking, “Wisdom is often seen as the pinnacle or hallmark of adult thinking” (Merriam & Caffarella, p. 161). However, they explained that this wisdom of the ages continues to be a “fluid and elusive idea, which is most often characterized by the acceptance of ambiguity, as one of its many virtues” (Merriam & Caffarella, p. 161). Even though wisdom is an elusive idea, many researchers agreed that “wisdom is the province of adulthood, although older is not always equated with wiser” (p. 161). Merriam and Caffarella quoted a study by Sternberg involving lay persons and specialists in which both groups perceived interrelatedness between intelligence, wisdom, and creativity (p. 163). As a wife, mother, grandmother to four generations, teacher, church, business and community leader, Elizabeth influenced others by sharing her wisdom in

the form of leadership, lessons, love, and laughter through the example that she set, the stories that she told, the love that she shared, and the laughter she enjoyed.

#### Elizabeth's Words - Summary

The life of an educator with a naturally friendly, outgoing, and positive personality who lived to be 95 years old obviously influenced hundreds and maybe thousands of lives. The biographical study reveals opportunities that Elizabeth had as a lifelong learner and leader to influence other people including her family, students, church, and community. This study provided the means to interview 26 people concerning the effect that Elizabeth's life had on them. The response to this question concerning the effect and influences that resulted from her lifelong learning and leadership journey is Elizabeth's legacy to her family, church, and community. The participants' words revealed her "Legacy of Lifelong Learning: Lessons, Leadership, Love, and Laughter."

#### Participants' Words - Summary

Legacy: Leadership, Lessons, Love, and Laughter Theme. The terms most used to respond to this research question included leader, lessons, and love with the method of teaching and modeling by Elizabeth referred to throughout the study as being entertainingly presented through laughter and stories. Generally, while all the individuals interviewed expressed having been influenced by Elizabeth Pendleton, the individuals with the less close and very close relationships provided detailed portraits of Elizabeth's influence with the most detail. (See the Figure 2 on page 67 that provides a representation of the responses by closeness of relationship to Elizabeth.)

Her great-grandson-in-law Anthony De Luise responded that the effect that Elizabeth had on his life was:

Specifically, Libby taught me to love family unconditionally. Libby certainly loved her family in this way. She never judged, blamed, or held grudges. Libby always provided the support her family members needed. She is more than the matriarch of this family. She was the foundation that every member of this family has used and will use to build their lives. Her unconditional love was the greatest lesson she taught me. Most importantly, she taught this lesson not only through the words she spoke, but through her actions.

Great-grandson Kevin Cate responded that Elizabeth influenced him when she taught him the following words of wisdom:

Simplicity. Libby was simple. Libby taught me to say “God Bless” to truckers cutting me off, to say your prayers at night, to eat right, and [to know the difference between] my left and right. She brought the best out of people, by expecting nothing less.

She taught me that impromptu dancing in the kitchen to “Sugar in the Morning” was the only way to live – a philosophy that borders on brilliant.

Ultimately she was a teacher. Like the God she worshipped, she educated through example and through stories.

Paula Cate, her granddaughter, responded that Elizabeth’s “priceless gift to me were her words of encouragement and wisdom. Libbie was born with a wonderful spirit and that spirit would shine even in the most difficult days. Libbie was a natural leader but most of all she was everybody’s ‘best friend.’” Further, Cate added that she, “considered her to be a role model and I pray that I will be able to share some of her stories with my grandchildren.” Great-granddaughter Elizabeth Cate expressed the influence that Elizabeth had on her life, “she was the matriarch of my family and the role model of my life and she was a leader because she exemplified everything that is good, encouraged me to grow, and to have my own identity. She gave me the security to stand as an individual.”

Todd Dickson, grandson-in-law, stated that he, “learned to enjoy and be happy everyday no matter what it presented to you” from Elizabeth. He described her as “a natural leader who was respected by everyone who knew her” and that she “did not need a position of authority to be considered a leader.” Dickson continued, “Everyone respected her because of the way she

lived every day of her life. She was so positive and her education gave her an understanding of things, but it was only a tool. Her natural abilities to talk with people, and her strong faith were her best assets.” Former grandson-in-law Steve Bailey observed that, “Her wisdom came from deep within and that she was steadfast in her love, tolerance, and understanding.” He noted that, “Outward appearances would indicate that Libbie was a follower due to her cooperative and gentle spirit; however, she would never compromise her love or her faith.” He declared that his “heart feels her influences daily and that she was the best example of leadership by example in my lifetime.”

Other participants’ comments included, “she was a great role model for leadership,” “she had a “sense of responsibility to the community,” “she had “good leadership qualities,” and “she was a good leader for her family.” A few participants referred to her work and community service, “She was a leader and when she spoke people listened. They respected her opinions, what she had to say was also genuine. She was genuinely interested in other people.” More than one person reported that she was a “leader as a school teacher, a leader in business, and a leader in church.”

Great-granddaughters Allison Bailey Stewart and Rachel Bailey De Luise listed brief examples of Elizabeth’s influence as lessons, often humorous, that they learned: “always make my husband think or feel that he was part of every decision that we made as a family, speak with more clarity, always say your prayers, count your blessings, not to speak of a former spouse in front of children, and to live our lives with integrity and honesty.” Former employee and aide-companion Martha Gammon explained that “the influence she had with me was to love everybody, whether you liked them or you didn’t. You just let on like you do like them, you

know. And she would say, I do like everybody and I would say, well, I do too Libby. But I think that she taught me . . . to love everybody and try to do for people.”

In separate email responses, Paula Cate and Elizabeth Cate both presented the lasting legacy that the life of Elizabeth Pendleton had on them. Paula Cate wrote, “Not a single day goes by that I am not reminded of her powerful influence in my life. Every day with Libbie was special because she made you feel special. I miss Libbie, she left me with so many wonderful memories that I can smile through my tears when I think of her. I am so thankful that she was my grandmother.” Elizabeth Cate summed up most of the responses to this research question when she wrote, “Libby will be in my heart encouraging and cheering me on forever. Her words still resonate with me and as I grow older. I come to understand and learn more through what she said. She will live on and my children will learn the lessons she taught me.”

Question 6: In what ways does telling her story enhance the understanding of lifelong learning?

Related Literature – Summary

In recent years, researchers have noted the importance of recognizing educational biography as an aid to further the understanding of learning. Therefore, presenting Elizabeth Pendleton’s life story as an educational biography provided a means of enhancing the understanding of lifelong learning. As stated in Chapter 2, Kridel (1997) concluded that, “The study of biography is slowly [sic] emerging as a significant area for development in the field of educational leadership” (p. 3).

Dominicé’s research with educational biography led him to a similar conclusion regarding respect for each person’s distinct life history (2000, p. xix). He explained, “The examination of previous learning experiences can empower people to assume greater responsibility for future learning experiences...life events, life contexts, personal, and socio-

cultural experiences contribute to the complexity of a person's life," and therefore, "the person's learning" (p. xix). Further, Dominicé reported that educational biography offers "basic data for thinking about education as a much broader phenomenon than formal learning alone" (p. 3).

Because "most adult learning occurs outside formal education" (Dominicé, p. 4), it is necessary to explore the life culture, society, and circumstances of the individual to understand the process of learning. Thus, educational biography should be a means for understanding adult learning and should be utilized by practitioners who plan and conduct programs for adults (p. xvii).

As specified in an NIA press release, "NIA Seeks Strategies to Preserve Brain Health" (2006), a report published online in *Alzheimer's and Dementia: the Journal of the Alzheimer's Association*, recommended intensifying strategies to preserve brain health as people age. The suggestions for maintaining or enhancing cognitive and emotional function included education [lifelong learning], cardiovascular health, and physical activity as being associated with [good] brain health (NIA, 2006). Education was one of the areas listed as playing a role toward maintaining brain health, "Higher levels of education correlate with both good cognitive and emotional function in the scientific literature" (NIA, 2006); however, there was no consensus as to why this may be so.

Nussbaum, presented a report at an American Society on Aging Annual Meeting in 1999 that had dramatic implications connecting aging with education. At the meeting he explained, "Carefully conducted studies are now providing data that points to the possibility that learning may be a recipe for prevention of disease." Other new theories developed from the research indicated that "education acts as a surrogate for the important environmental experiences that build brain cells" and "the direct effect of education on brain structure continues throughout life"

(Goggin, 1999). Due to the implications of these findings, it appeared that education should continue from childhood through old age. Thus, “Nussbaum believes that policymakers will need to think about education in new terms” (Goggin, 1999).

Therefore, telling Elizabeth Pendleton’s story as an educational biography provides a means of enhancing the understanding of lifelong learning through an analysis of Elizabeth’s own words and the words of 33 people who knew her which led to identifying Elizabeth Pendleton as a lifelong learner and formed a means to enhance the understanding of lifelong learning.

#### Elizabeth’s Words - Summary

As stated earlier, her experience as a natural informal, nonformal, and formal learner from the biography led to identifying her as a lifelong learner. Her formal education included graduating from Holston High School, Hiwassee College, and East Tennessee State University as an adult non-traditional student. Her informal learning was evidenced by her work in her community, Eastern Star, and Wheeler United Methodist Church. Additionally, her informal learning continued with various activities that included her socialization and interaction with people as evidenced by her lifelong interest in sports often attending football and basketball games, playing Rook and Bridge games, reading for pleasure, and traveling. Certainly, she was also a nonformal learner substantiated by several behaviors; for example, the fact that she lived on a farm and instinctively learned about livestock, gardening, and tobacco farming, the stories that she told and re-told, and her participation in community affairs. From the reflection on her life in her own words, it was apparent that she provided an example of a lifelong learner that can enhance the understanding of lifelong learning.

### Participants' Words - Summary

The participants were asked what factors in Elizabeth's life led to her long life. The responses mirrored recent general media information on healthy living in the United States which suggested that along with proper nutrition, exercise, and stimulation of the brain (learning) older adults could have a higher quality of life.

Elizabeth Pendleton's life offered an opportunity to study an individual who fit the description and thus the information gleaned from the study of her life as a lifelong learner and will provide an example for other researchers. As listed in the participants' observations in the previous research questions, this study revealed that Elizabeth Pendleton had several traits, beliefs, attitudes, and characteristics that the participants noted as factors that led to her being classified as a lifelong learner. These observations and descriptions were categorized and coded into 14 categories: Family Roots, Devotion, Connection to Family; Faith and Prayer; Optimistic, Cheerful Personality and Positive Outlook on Life; Physical Condition and Mental Health; Learner and Adaptor to Change; Strength and Strong Self-Confidence; Gratitude, Compassion, and Concern for Others; Inclination To Succeed; Overcomer; Perseverance; Formal, Informal, and Nonformal Teacher and Educator; Friendly, Sociable, Community Member; Legacy: Leadership, Lessons, Love, and Laughter; Satisfactory Long Life; and Goal Achiever. Therefore, the study of her life has enhanced the understanding of lifelong learning.

A Satisfied Long-Life Theme. The final two categories from participants' observations and descriptions refer to their speculation on the reasons that Elizabeth Pendleton had a long and satisfied life and the achieved goals in her lifetime. Nearly all participants stated that the reasons for her long life were her "deep faith and devotion to God and her church," "the love and concern that she shared with her family and others," her "positive attitude about life" and several



stated it was her “good genes.” Overall, the speculations revealed that the participants recognized specific reasons for Elizabeth Pendleton’s long life.

One participant offered a response concerning love, “I don’t know anyone else who is loved more by a group of people than Libbie. Neither age nor geography seemed to make a difference with love she shared with her family.” Another participant pointed out that she “had no burdens, no debts, and she had a clean conscious.” Several participants conjectured that it was her “positive attitude and constant positive outlook on life” and “her determination to make the best of every situation.”

Almost all participants agreed with Paula Cate’s observation of her “strong Christian faith” and “her love and commitment to her family.” Todd Dickson proposed that it was her “desire to keep learning and staying current with what was going on in her community and in the world.” He added that “exercise, eating vegetables and that her good health was due to her being mentally and physically active.” Steve Bailey stated that it was “her attitude of forgiveness of others that led to her long life.” Elizabeth Cate responded that it was Elizabeth’s “youthful spirit that led her to a long satisfying life.” Dorothy Ratcliff answered that “in addition to her faith, it was probably her family-- the support and the love of her family, and her love of life.”

In a group interview, Allison Stewart, Rachel De Luise, and Anthony De Luise discussed Elizabeth’s long life as due to her “profound faith in God . . . holistic living . . . and exercising daily.” And they stated that the more fit you are, the better fit your mind is, and “Libbie was a huge, huge advocate for daily exercise and talked about it a lot.” They recalled her telling them to, “Get your exercises done in the morning and say your prayers every day with routine and discipline.” Rachel summarized, “It was her prayers, her exercise . . . her mentality, her optimism, her belief in the fact that people are inherently good, her belief that everybody could

learn if they put themselves to something regardless of their natural ability, her adaptability to change, and her faith in God.” Plus, they added she “always ate well and she ate a lot and she ate several times throughout the day.”

Martha Gammon replied that Elizabeth Pendleton “had a good life, she enjoyed life to no end.” And Gammon commented that Elizabeth’s “husband, her children, and her friends were her life . . . She loved them and that’s why she kept going. She loved Paula, and the love that her people gave to her –her children, her daughter and her grandchildren.” Gammon added that Elizabeth, “thought as much of her grandchildren as she did her daughter and she thought you all were hers . . . the love that she had for her family, her church and her people kept her going.”

Goal Achievement Theme. Not every participant responded descriptively to the question concerning achievement of goals probably because Elizabeth may never have discussed it with them; however, most generally agreed that Elizabeth did achieve all the goals that she set for her life. Patricia Skelton replied that she felt that Elizabeth met her goals as a teacher and as a real estate broker. Skelton said that Elizabeth seemed pleased that her family had, “blossomed out – did well . . . she used to talk about each individual person [in her family] and that she always had some kind of a goal.” Grandson-in-law Todd Dickson identified an attitude of achieving goals. He stated that Elizabeth achieved her goals on a continual basis and “once she achieved one goal, she set another.” Dickson felt “that the process of achievement and new directions always gave her something new to learn and once she learned what there was to know, and reached the end goal, the process would start over again.” Elizabeth Cate identified family goals, “I think Libbie did achieve her goals. I think the thing she wanted most was a family, and a growing family is what she got. She was always so proud of all of her grandchildren and I think she would say her greatest accomplishment was having and supporting a family.”

When asked if Elizabeth was born in the 21<sup>st</sup> century instead of the 20<sup>th</sup> century would she be the same person, 90 year-old J.C. Akard, former Superintendent of Sullivan County Schools, and the person who promoted Elizabeth to a supervisory position responded, “she would be upfront in the good things that are being done today, which will be things today that were not done back then that are accepted today. She would be a leader today. She would be the same leader and fit into society today as, as she did back then.”

Question 7: What generalizations or experiences from the life of Elizabeth Pendleton can be identified that will expose the lifelong learning challenges that face a growing population of aging adults?

#### Related Literature Summary

For individuals interested in understanding the phenomenon of lifelong learning, the literature included in this study will enhance their understanding. The following references to current and past research and literature and linkage to this study will provide a key to their understanding of lifelong learning.

The literature revealed that Americans are living longer lives; and thus, need to learn to live with the health benefits of lifelong learning. The report by the NIA report identified trends in aging Americans as “the United States population aged 65 and over is expected to double in size within the next 25 years. By 2030, almost 1 out of every 5 Americans – some 72 million people – will be 65 years or older. . . the age group of people 85 years old and older is the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population” (Dramatic Changes, 2006). Through the study of this educational biography on the life of Elizabeth Pendleton, individuals have a model of an individual who lived to be 95 years old and always had an inclination toward lifelong learning. As expressed by Hayes (1998), “That each of us holds the key to our own world is a profoundly

simple idea, but it could be the most formidable barrier to living any of us will ever face” (p. 7). The key to living a meaningful, successful, and satisfying life belongs to each individual. Hayes claimed that, “People who lead a satisfying life, who are in tune with their past and with their future—in short, people whom we would call ‘happy’ are generally people who have lived their lives according to rules they themselves created” (p. 42). Thus, as people live longer, there is a motivation for the general population to identify their opportunities to be lifelong learners and the challenges they will face.

For researchers interested in the phenomenon of lifelong learning, generalizations can be made from the study of Elizabeth Pendleton’s experience as a lifelong learner. The presentation of a narrative biography of a lifelong learner allows readers to make assumptions. As Dominicé surmised “each biography has its own truth” (2000, p. 6) and educational biographies can help adult learners recognize social and interpersonal influences on their lives and educational activities. For adult educators and students, reading a prepared life history focused on learning can also clarify the interdependence of biographical themes, major life transitions, and educational activities, calling learners’ attention to both processes and outcomes in their lives and learning. The examination of lifelong learning in the life of Elizabeth Pendleton provides a formal resource for researchers to study the inclination for an individual to be lifelong learner. Jarvis (1987) is quoted in *Learning From Our Lives* as reporting that the “...literature is giving increasing attention to the societal context that influences adult learning” (as cited in Dominicé, 2000, p. 6). Therefore, the study of an individual’s current social, economic, and political environments and not just to his or her past educational experiences are relevant to the overall understanding of lifelong learning. The societal influences are powerful and as pointed out by Dominicé, “...Through oral and written narratives, educational biography offers the values of

reminiscence and the interpretation of experience and influences upon that experience” (Dominicé, p. xv). While his approach was for adults to review their own personal educational experience and learn to guide their learning, it is obvious that the educational biography of Elizabeth Pendleton may be useful as a tool to research and examine the lives of individual adult learners to glean insight toward their learning experiences for the purpose of recognizing the characteristics and traits that lead one to be a lifelong learner.

Educational biography offers basic data for thinking about education as a much broader phenomenon than formal learning alone; thus, it is necessary to explore the life culture, society, and circumstances of the individual to understand the process of learning (Dominicé). This qualitative educational biography offers the opportunity for individuals and researchers to examine and interpret, enhance and enrich, and gain understanding of lifelong learning.

#### Elizabeth’s words summary

For individuals and researchers interested in the phenomenon of lifelong learning, the educational biography of Elizabeth Pendleton provides a model of an adult with an inclination toward lifelong learning. As previously stated, Elizabeth Pendleton’s life offered an opportunity to study an individual who fit the description of a lifelong learner, and thus the information gleaned from the study of her life will provide an example for individuals and researchers.

#### Participants’ words summary

Through the rich, thick description provided by Elizabeth Pendleton and the 26 participants in this study, an inclination for lifelong learning was revealed in the life example of Elizabeth Pendleton. The participants observed and described several traits, beliefs, attitudes, and characteristics that have been noted as factors that led to her being identified as a lifelong learner. These observations and descriptions were categorized and coded into 14 categories based

on Elizabeth Pendleton's experience as a natural informal, nonformal, and formal learner. Therefore, the study of her life has enhanced the understanding of lifelong learning.

### Conclusions

As the literature suggested and the study reported, there are health benefits that result from individuals being lifelong learners. The challenge for Americans of the next century is to take advantage of the opportunity to become lifelong learners – to continue to acquire new knowledge and skills through nonformal, informal, and formal education as in the example of Elizabeth Pendleton.

A qualitative study presented in the format of an educational biography on the life of Elizabeth Pendleton provided a model for those individuals who want to understand the phenomenon of lifelong learning. It seems obvious that some individuals, like Elizabeth Pendleton, are born with a natural inclination toward lifelong learning inherent their personality traits and characteristics. However, it occurs to me that other beliefs and attitudes are developed through personal choices, decision making, and purposeful living.

In Chapter 2, I defined lifelong learning as a process for acquiring knowledge and expertise from childhood through adulthood. The challenge for individuals is to accept the concept of lifelong learning as a continual process and to adopt an attitude toward achieving the goal of becoming a lifelong learner. Hayes appropriately stated: "Learning is an act of becoming, and lifelong learning yields the richest dimension of human experience available to us. Learning of our own volition throughout our lives is the key to a meaningful future. . . Learning, understanding, and re-understanding provide the impetus for moving beyond the American Dream" (1998, p. 301).

The subject of this study, my grandmother, Elizabeth Pendleton, led a remarkable life in a century full of changes – from riding horses to placing a man on the moon – from being a female without the right to vote to women as prime ministers and world leaders – from community exchange line phones to cellular communication – from one-room schoolhouses to online degree programs – she accepted and eagerly looked forward to each new day with interest and delight. She had a sparkling twinkle in her hazel brown eyes and always a smile on her face with a positive, cheerful word to speak. Elizabeth delighted in people and progress.

In the last two years of her life as her vision dimmed and her body became fragile, she continued to point out to me the bright sunshine in life. Just prior to her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday, I took her shopping for a birthday dress at the local mall. She was weak with age and just walking into the mall took a great amount of her energy and determination. I assisted her as she carefully and slowly tried on each new dress that I brought into the dressing room at the J.C. Penney department store. She knew that we had planned a party at Wheeler United Methodist Church for all her friends and family to celebrate her special birthday and she wanted to look her best. She tried on several dresses before she found the one that she thought was suitable.

As I stood at the edge of the dressing room, I watched her try on the orchid and beige flowered chiffon dress she chose as her favorite. Her slightly stooped, weakened body suddenly straightened. She pulled back her shoulders, lifted her head high, and proudly looked into the mirror at her image in the new dress – a sparkle in her eye, spring in her step, and a smile on her face – she was shining brightly and was ready for another new day . . . the memory of that lovely lady in the mirror will remain with me always.

In summary, Elizabeth Pendleton lived a life of purpose and passion as a lifelong learner. Her inclination toward continuous, self-directed, lifelong learning enhanced her quality of life

and influenced the lives of countless individuals. Elizabeth Pendleton left a legacy as a wife, mother, grandmother to four generations, teacher, church, business and community leader: Elizabeth influenced others by sharing her wisdom in the form of leadership, lessons, love, and laughter through the example that she set, the stories that she told, the love that she shared, and the laughter she enjoyed.

### Recommendations and Implications for Further Research

The phenomenon of lifelong learning is complex. The literature indicated that continued lifelong learning enhances the quality of life. The implications and predictions made by the adult education and lifelong learning experts have illuminated the need for all learning (informal, formal, and nonformal) to be recognized as part of the process of education that begins in childhood and continues throughout adulthood as lifetime learning.

One method of study on this issue is to examine examples of individuals who are lifelong learners and to look at a holistic view of education through the lenses of biographies or life histories. As suggested in educational biographical dissertations by two previous students in the department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis (ELPA) presented at East Tennessee State University, there are implications that further research is needed. Smith (2007) stated, “More research is needed on significant private individuals who can be found in communities, large and small, throughout the world. These are people who impact the lives of those around them in small, yet consistent ways” (Smith, p. 127). And Timbs (2003) wrote that educational biographies can inspire and motivate the reader. He focused in detail on the benefits of educational biography especially for studies of individuals in rural communities and in similar time periods for the purpose of cross-comparisons:

Educational biographies from a wide geographic area need to be completed, including those from residents of both rural and urban areas. Biographies focused on residents of



different areas of the nation should be considered for study as well. In addition, subjects from similar time periods need to be selected so that a cross-comparison study can be undertaken.

Especially in rural communities that are so interconnected, personal narratives can become an important tool in not only motivation and inspiration, but also in the efforts to preserve local history.

Each person has a story to tell, and those stories are unique. From that uniqueness, though, come the truest indications of who we are as people and as learners. When this uniqueness spans a lifetime, the lessons are numerous and invaluable. (p. 163)

In conclusion, the implications of the need for further research come from the leading experts and scholars on lifelong learning, qualitative researchers, cultural and historical researchers, and educational biographers. This study of one unique life serves as a model for others as they seek to understand the phenomenon of lifelong learning. Other models of lifelong learners need to be examined and added to the literature as each person's experience as a learner is unique, and all individuals have a lifetime of learning— all have a legacy to leave.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### PERSONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

This questionnaire is designed to gather information for a dissertation that is an educational biography of Elizabeth Gammon Pendleton (1909 -2005). The title is “A Legacy of Lifelong Learning: Lessons, Leadership, Love, & Laughter in the Life of Elizabeth Gammon Pendleton.” The basis for the educational biography is provided through recorded archival interviews with Elizabeth Pendleton and the data (information) that will be gleaned from you as part of this study. The overall point of this qualitative dissertation is to provide a descriptive analysis and detailed explanation of the attitudes, characteristics, beliefs, and traits that reflect “lifelong learning” in Elizabeth Pendleton’s life while celebrating her life and preserving her memory.

A person who is a “lifelong learner” has an attitude, characteristics, traits, and beliefs that inspire them to continually acquire new knowledge and learning that may be formal (schooling, etc), informal (church, etc), and non-formal (hobbies). In other words, lifelong learners are curious about life and learning and seek opportunities to add new knowledge to their previous knowledge. Recent scholarship suggests that people who continuing to learn throughout their lifetime maintain their “brain” health especially when combined with cardiovascular health and physical activity. Although Elizabeth Pendleton never used the term “lifelong learner,” the presumption for this dissertation is that she was a lifelong learner.

#### PERSONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The questions are designed to gather data about the life of Elizabeth Gammon Pendleton. You may respond through a personal interview or with a written response delivered either by email or U.S. Mail. If you are available for interview, it should last approximately one hour each and may evolve into additional questions based on your response. Several of the questions are grouped by topic – you may respond to some or all of the questions. Please respond thoughtfully and with specific description or summarize when necessary.

##### Question 1:

What is your name ?

What is your current address, phone number, email address ?

What is your date and place of birth?

##### Question 2:

Explain the context of your relationship with Elizabeth Gammon Pendleton (EGP)?

What were the years when you had a relationship with EGP ? Did you have a close relationship with EGP ?

Do you recall how you met EGP ? If so, how, or in what context?

When was the last time that you saw EGP? Can you describe the scene ?

Question 3:

What were the most important words of “wisdom” that you learned from EGP ?  
In other words, what did you learn from her ?

Question 4:

Did you notice anything “special” about her personality ?  
Can you give an example?  
Did you notice anything “special” about her character ? Can you give an example?  
What do you believe was the incentive for her attitudes and beliefs?

Question 5:

Did you consider EGP to be a leader ? If so, why ?  
Was she a model for you to follow ? If so, why ?

Question 6:

Describe an event or occasion that you recall being with EGP.  
What were the positive outcomes of this event ?  
What were the negative outcomes of this event ?

Question 7:

Give some examples of other events or occasions (time) that you spent with EGP.

Respond to one or more of the following:

Describe an example of a humorous experience with EGP.  
Describe an example of a holiday experience with EGP.  
Describe an example of a serious experience with EGP.  
Describe an example of a happy experience with EGP.  
Describe an example of an inspirational experience with EGP.

Question 8:

Was there anything specific (characteristics, traits, attitudes, beliefs) that you noticed in EGP that was different from other people in her same type of life situation or circumstance? Describe.

Question 9:

As a \_\_\_\_\_ (peer, supervisor, friend, employee, relative) of EGP, can you describe any attribute that would have led to her having a long, satisfying life?

Question 10:

If EGP had been born in this generation (2000s) rather than in 1909, do you think she would have been the same person ?

Question 11:

If EGP were alive today, what would she say was the “key” to her long life?

Question 12:

If you were to be critical of the characteristics and traits of EGP, what would you say ?

What do you think EGP saw as barriers in her life ? Can you give an example ?

Question 13:

Do you think that EGP achieved all the personal goals that she set for her life?

If so, describe what they were ? If not, explain why not.

What attitude do you think helped her achieve her goals ?

What do you think prevented her from achieving her goals ?

Question 14:

What influence did the life of EGP have on you Did it result from her having a formal education, an informal education?

Did it result from her being a leader or not being a leader ? Explain.

Question 15:

With your knowledge of EGP, what factors do you think led to her long life ?

Question 16:

If a “lifelong learner” is a person who continually seeks to gain formal, non-formal, or informal knowledge, does this in your opinion describe EGP? If so, why? If not, why not ?

Question 17:

Did EGP mention the word “gumption” to you ?

What was the reference that she referred to when she used that word ?

Question 18:

Is there anything else that you would want to add about EGP that was not covered in the preceding questions ?

Please add and/or describe your favorite EGP story, experience, etc if not previously included in this interview.



## APPENDIX B

### POEM IN HONOR OF ELIZABETH PENDLETON BY ROBERT RATCLIFF

Libby

Her dress is like that of a Shakespearean teacher of mine;  
bold prints, and pastels that speak of her time.  
Her time is all seasons like sweet scents of spring.  
In summer she uplifts spirits on butterfly wings.  
In fall she's the colorful goddess of light  
who slips into your heart with words not trite.  
Soon 'tis winter but she's all aglow  
as she lightens your spirit as white as snow.

I met this Shakespearean beauty in the fall.  
Her words lilted, bantered, bounced as a ball.  
Love flowed from her for all to see  
and I never thought it wasn't all for me.  
By spring she'd entranced everyone she met.  
To see her color summer would be something yet.  
Ole winter warmed up in fear of her coming.

She lit up my spirits and the somber church pews,  
her words ring joy in the hearts with the news  
she'd had another Sunday with friends so dear  
and I'm so glad to be somewhere near  
this lovely, powerful lady of wisdom and grace  
who gave full measure of herself without a trace  
of pride or anger, never thinking she's the reason  
I've chosen her lady of all the seasons.

Robert I Ratcliff

APPENDIX C

PHOTOGRAPH GALLERY



*Figure 92. Gallery I: Selected Personal Items of Elizabeth Pendleton.*



*Figure 93. Gallery II: Selected Family Keepsakes of Elizabeth.*



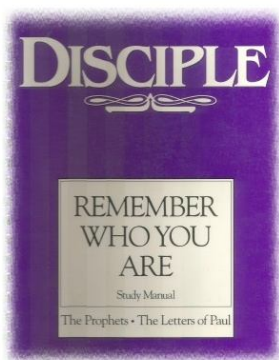


Figure 94. Gallery III: Selected Personal Papers, Awards and Certificates of Elizabeth Part A.



Women's Missionary Society  
July 10, 1958  
President - Mrs. Ruby Darnes Duncan  
Vice-President - Miss Mattie Milhorn  
Sec. Secretary - Mrs. Jennie Barnes  
Cor. Secretary - Mrs. T. A. Hamilton  
Treasurer - Mrs. S. C. Lacy  
Membership was as follows: Miss Ruby Darnes,  
Mrs. E. F. Darnes, Mrs. A. F. Darnes, Mrs. F. E. Darnes,  
Mrs. J. B. Darnes, Mrs. A. S. Darnes, Miss Alice Darnes,  
Miss Jean Darnes, Mrs. E. D. Cross, Miss Florence Dock,  
Mrs. George Gannon, Mrs. R. L. Gannon, Jr., Mrs. Sam  
Gannon, Mrs. Sara Gannon, Mrs. T. A. Hamilton, Miss  
Florence Hickman, Mrs. W. L. Hawk, Mrs. D. E. Hamilton,  
Mrs. S. C. Lacy, Mrs. Sam Mills, Miss Lou Morris, Mrs.  
Pats Pendleton, Mrs. E. L. Sanders, Mrs. Vernon Row-  
land, and Miss Mattie Milhorn  
Wheeler  
United Methodist Women  
July 12, 1976  
President - Nancy Wagner  
Vice-President - Linda Carrioco  
Secretary - Louise Dalley  
Treasurer - Margaret Keith  
Membership Chairman - Polly Wagner  
Chairman Of Program Resources - Sissy Bryant  
Chairman of Nominating Committee - Geo. Abe Luttrell  
Mission Coordinators  
Supportive Community - Cindy Liverman  
Christian Personhood - Lynda Kilby  
Christian Social Concerns - Nancy Poe  
Christian Global Concerns - Agnes Darnes

July 12, 1976  
A PROGRAM OF HISTORY AND HERITAGE  
Honoring Charter Members  
Past Presidents &  
Those With Long Periods Of Service  
OUTSTANDING MEMBERS  
Mrs. Jean Baker  
Mrs. Dortha Cross  
Mrs. Ruby Darnes Duncan  
Mrs. Deanna Gannon  
Mrs. Elsie Gannon  
Mrs. Evelyn Green  
Miss Flossie Hickman  
Miss Mattie Milhorn  
Mrs. Preston Mills  
Mrs. Della McCurry  
Mrs. Elizabeth Pendleton  
Mrs. Louise Rowland  
Mrs. Lou Watkins  
PAST PRESIDENTS:  
Mrs. Billie Berry  
Mrs. Dortha Cross  
Mrs. Ruby Duncan  
Mrs. Evelyn Green  
Mrs. Pauline Hamilton  
Mrs. Evelyn Harvey  
Mrs. Mary F. Keith  
Mrs. Margaret Keith  
Mrs. Lynda Kilby  
Miss Mattie Milhorn  
Mrs. Preston Mills  
Mrs. Elizabeth Pendleton  
Mrs. Betty Sue Poe  
Mrs. Nancy Poe  
LONG PERIODS OF SERVICE:  
Agnes Darnes Margaret Keith Mary F. Keith  
Dortha Cross Georgia Abe Luttrell  
Evelyn Green Mattie Milhorn

Handwritten ledger with columns for date, description, and amount. Entries include:

Date	Description	Amount
2-22	Mr. Lind	4.00
2-25	Blanchard Hwy # 1919	35.25
2-27	Blanchard Hwy # 1930	28.00
2-30	Blanchard Hwy # 1939	125.00
3-24	Blanchard Hwy # 1945	4.00
5-9	Blanchard Hwy # 1951	112.77
6-10	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	12.29
5-14	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	121.53
6-6	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	23.79
7-20	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	4.00
8-11	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	24.98
9-12	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	112.65
10-21	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	12.52
11-31	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	124.24
12-31	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	45.17
1-30	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	130.75
2-30	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
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1-31	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
2-28	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
3-28	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
4-28	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
5-28	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
6-28	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
7-28	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
8-28	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
9-28	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
10-28	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
11-28	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
12-28	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
1-29	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
2-29	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
3-29	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
4-29	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
5-29	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
6-29	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
7-29	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
8-29	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
9-29	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
10-29	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
11-29	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
12-29	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
1-30	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
2-30	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
3-30	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
4-30	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
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7-30	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
8-30	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
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3-28	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
4-28	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
5-28	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
6-28	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
7-28	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75
8-28	Blanchard Hwy # 1954	30.75</



*Figure 96. Selected Kitchenware of Elizabeth.*





| *Figure 97. Family Pictures - Part A.*



*Figure 98. Family Pictures - Part B.*





*Figure 99. Family Pictures - Part C.*



*Figure 100.* Family Pictures - Part – D.





*Figure 101. Family Pictures - Part E.*

#### A Poem Written For Libby

Her dress is like that of a Shakespearean  
teacher of mine;  
Bold prints, and pastels that speak  
of her time.  
Her time is all seasons like sweet  
scents of spring.  
In summer she uplifts spirits  
on butterfly wings.  
In fall she's the colorful goddess of light  
who slips into your heart with  
words not trite.  
Soon 'tis winter but she's all aglow as she  
lightens your spirit as white as snow.

I met this Shakespearean beauty in the fall.  
Her words lifted, bantered, bounced  
as a ball.

Love flowed from her for all to see and I  
never thought it wasn't all for me.  
By spring she'd entranced  
everyone she met.

To see her color summer would be  
something yet.  
Ole winter warmed up in fear of her  
coming.

She lit up my spirits and the somber  
church pews,  
Her words ring joy in hearts with the news

She'd had another Sunday with  
friends so dear  
And I'm so glad to be somewhere near  
this lovely, powerful lady of  
wisdom and grace  
Who gave full measure of herself  
without a trace  
Of pride or anger, never thinking  
she's the reason  
I've chose her lady of all the seasons.

Robert I. Ratcliff

Libbie's 95<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration  
Five Generations September 2005



#### In Remembrance of

Elizabeth Gammon Pendleton

September 25, 1909- June 23,  
2005



John 3: 16

*For God so loved the world that  
he gave his one and only son  
that whosoever believes in him  
shall not perish but will have  
eternal life.*

#### Service of Death and Resurrection

June 25, 2005  
Elizabeth G. Pendleton  
September 25, 1909- June 23, 2005

#### ENTRANCE

Prelude	Selected Hymns	Christopher Cate Elizabeth Cate
Call to Worship		Chancel Choir
The Word of Grace		
Greeting		
Opening Prayer		Pastor
*Hymn	"In the Garden"	No. 314

#### PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

\*Old Testament Lesson Psalm 23  
The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:  
he leadeth me beside the still waters.  
He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of  
righteousness for his name's sake.  
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of  
death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;  
thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.  
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine  
enemies; thou anointest my head with oil;  
my cup runneth over.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of  
my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Witness Kevin Cate  
Anthony DeLuise

#### New Testament Lesson

#### Selected Passages

Witness		Keith Cate
Anthem		Chancel Choir
Sermon		Pastor
Hymn	"Amazing Grace" (stanza 1,2,6)	No. 378
Witness		Darby Ratcliff

#### Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord's Prayer No. 895  
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,  
forever. Amen.

#### COMMENDATION

Dismissal With Blessing		
Choral Benediction	"The Irish Blessing"	Chancel Choir

\* Those who are able, please stand

A Service of Committal immediately follows  
at Tri-Cities Memory Gardens

Figure 102. Celebration of Life Ceremony.

## APPENDIX D

### MY AUNT LIBBY

She was the center piece of her family. A larger than life spirit who came to spread her love, caring and genuine concern on all who she crossed paths with. I can only remember Aunt Libby with a big bright smile on my face and in my heart. She taught me first that every little second in life was a plan that God carefully made just for you. Trust it and don't question it! While living with her I felt safe, as if a ray of beautiful positive energy surrounded me. At that time in my life it was like God said to me you are completely drained of all your hope - let me give you some. That Hope came in the form of Aunt Libby.

I heard her pray to God at night remembering every person she ever knew. It amazed me at the time and devotion she spent in prayer.

Her Love for Her family was the most notable thing about her! This is what I think about when I think of Aunt Libby! Family! Period! Family! The kind that sticks together and takes care of one another. She always talked about each member as if they were her favorite. Never missing one grandchild, great-grandchild and or great great! Knowing each detail about their hobbies and plans for life. I loved her for the dedication she had for any family member..including me! The intimate talks about my grandmother, her parents and mostly the advice she would give me about trying to find my path in life, are moments I will treasure for the rest of my life and will pass on to my children and their children.

When you leave this earth You won't take your home, your body or your money. The only thing you hope for is that you made a difference in someones life and the memories you've created will be passed on to the next generation! Just like Aunt Lib has done!

She held her family and extended family together because of her commitment to family! I challenge you to carry on the family tradition in your family and make a difference in your sister, brother, niece, nephew, granddaughter, grandson, daughter, son and or cousin's life in memory of Aunt Lib.

Thanks for teaching me soo many wonderful things. Mamaw finally has her sister home and I am sure you both are catching up on the year you lost being together!  
You will be greatly missed Aunt Libby!

Email from Laura Ann Mills  
Great-niece (granddaughter of Elizabeth's sister, Preston)  
June 2005

## APPENDIX E

### PASSAGE

BY RACHEL BAILEY DE LUISE

The painting of a schoolhouse hangs crooked on the wall. There is an orange recliner, a Reader's Digest open and folded nearby, a magnifying glass resting on its surface, and a crystal dish full of Werther's Originals wrapped neatly in gold foil. Most Sundays, I watched as she placed a glob of baked apples on top of a stale biscuit for an instant apple pie. The biscuit was not tenderly relished or picked at tentatively; it was heartily eaten in under two minutes, which included a story or two told in the meantime. The table was always napkin-littered, with lipstick smears marking their white crinkly paper surfaces. Her lips, distinct lip liner marks circling her mouth, moved quickly as she spoke, wiping the apricot syrup from her chin, laughing easily. There was nothing crude in her movements, only glimpses of a time when sturdy women bore several children and fed the chickens, although my grandmother hated chickens.

Most Sundays of her life were spent in church. Raised on a farm, she knew the God of the Depression and also the God that took her mother. She endured; she laughed often. She was resilient.

A chip clip kept her Ruffles fresh and crispy while the TV blared as background music. She told stories constantly, to let us know she was still vital and growing with every decade. She was a child, a dutiful daughter, a basketball player, a young woman with a career, a wife, a mother, a grandmother, a great-grandmother, a great-great grandmother, an old woman – pushing away the stones from our path. With every step.

She was 95 when I held her hand and read to her softly from the book of Proverbs, stroking her brow. She couldn't speak in the end; her throat was parched and dry, but her stories

still float around in my subconscious. Every now and then, I pull the pieces together and sit silently.

Hospice workers moved around her that day, taking note of her vitals, administering morphine. On a warm summer evening, quietly in her bed, she departed. That must have been so hard for her to wait until we left her side. She loved company, she loved to talk; she was a storyteller.

We all arrived the next moment –daughters and granddaughters from next door. As women, we stood alone in our individual pain; alike in blood, joined in ancestry, descended through the decades, sharing in a necessary transition of life. In similar skin, she lay before us, on her own bed, softly resting on our memories.

Yet to find voices, words were buried beneath our grief. For a moment, there was comfort in our solidarity – then, as quickly as the comfort came, we were left flailing, shoved to the surface of our pain.

We touched her softly.

I kissed her forehead.

My aunt prayed.

Afterward, we moved quietly through the house; different parts radiating from the same whole. The painting on the wall still hanging crooked – the magnifying glass awaiting the next passage. I picked up the volume of proverbs and gently closed the book.

\* \* \*

## APPENDIX F

### LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AND CONTRIBUTORS

J. Craft Akard .....	Bristol, TN
Carol Archer .....	Blountville, TN
Stephanie Ash.....	Kingsport, TN
Steve Bailey .....	Tallahassee, FL
Thelma Barnes.....	Blountville, TN
Chris Cate .....	Tallahassee, FL
Elizabeth Cate.....	Tampa, FL
Keith Cate.....	Tampa, FL
Kevin Cate .....	Tallahassee, FL
Paula Cate .....	Tampa, FL
Shirley Pendleton Ratcliff Carlson .....	Punta Gorda, FL
Whit Cross .....	Blountville, TN
Anthony DeLuise.....	Washington, DC
Rachel Bailey DeLuise .....	Washington, DC
Todd Dickson .....	Kingsport, TN
Mike Earles.....	Blountville, TN
Martha Gammon .....	Piney Flats, TN
Tim Gammon.....	Kingsport, TN
Catherine Gilbert .....	Kingsport, TN
Lucille Cross Jackson .....	Kingsport, TN
Margaret Keith .....	Blountville, TN
Barkley & Judy Mills.....	Kingsport, TN
Laura Ann Mills.....	Kingsport, TN
Darby Ratcliff.....	Blountville, TN
Dorothy Ratcliff .....	Kingsport, TN
Robert Ratcliff .....	Kingsport, TN
Teresa Weatherford Ratcliff.....	Blountville, TN
Patricia Skelton.....	Kingsport, TN
Mary Elizabeth Starnes .....	Kingsport, TN
Jerry Stewart .....	Kingsport, TN
Sam Stewart .....	Kingsport, TN
Allison Bailey Stewart .....	Kingsport, TN
Loraine Keith Taylor .....	Blountville, TN



VITA  
LOUISE RATCLIFFE BAILEY DICKSON

Personal Data:

Date of Birth: January 3, 1953

Place of Birth: Monterey County, California

Residence: Sullivan County, Tennessee

Family Status:

Husband: Todd J. Dickson

Children: Allison Bailey Stewart & Rachel Bailey De Luise

Grandchildren: Stephanie Grace Ash, Samuel Bailey Stewart, Sara Louise Stewart, Bailey Raffaele De Luise, & Bella Grace De Luise

Education:

Kingsport City School Public Schools 1959-1971

East Tennessee State University

Bachelor of General Studies, May 1996

Masters of Liberal Arts, May 2000

Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, Ed. D. May 2008

Professional Experience:

Academy of Dance Arts, Kingsport, Tennessee  
Owner and Director and Instructor 1976-1998

Kingsport's ShowTime Productions, Kingsport, Tennessee  
Producer and Director 1988 – present

Northeast State Technical Community College, Blountville, Tennessee  
Humanities Division, English Instructor, 2003 – present